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Let's face the facts about gambling

YET ANOTHER Royal Commission is studying the nation's gambling habits.

It is trying to find out how much money we pay to bookmakers, totes and pools, and how much we get back; whether gambling is really a great social evil, and, if so, how to check it; and how the Chancellor can tax those bets he has not so far been able to reach.

Not long ago disapproval of gambling was still so widespread that it was thought immoral for the State to recognize its existence by taking a share of the turnover in taxation.

That attitude has changed. Today there are estimated to be 10,000,000 people who bet regularly, in one way or another, and they "invest" at least £400,000,000 a year, or nearly enough to pay for the food subsidies.

Since the State has not only to raise money but to govern gamblers as well as non-gamblers, betting taxes are now imposed and have undoubtedly come to stay.

The trouble is that the present taxes on totes and pools have piled yet another injustice on to the mountain of anomalies and humbug of which our betting laws consist. If you fill in a football coupon or buy a tote ticket you pay tax. If you place a bet with a bookmaker you do not.

Perhaps the Royal Commission can devise some practical way of ending this anomaly. If its report is to be of any real use, this is the kind of job it must tackle.

WE do not want just another series of general observations on gambling. We do not want denunciations of half the population by spokesmen of the other half. We want this Commission to clear up the muddle of ideas and laws which confuse the betting situation—and to clear it up so forthrightly that every man will know in future how to think and act.

The Commission, for example, should advise the Government how to change those betting laws which now seem purely class measures. One law for the rich and another for the poor applies more to betting than to anything else.

A man whose social position gives him credit facilities can ring up his bookmaker and place a bet. A so-called poor man, who has no account with a bookmaker, is not supposed to place a bet at all—unless he goes to a racecourse and there hands over his money at a bookie's stand. So we have an arbitrary and quite indefensible distinction between two classes of would-be gamblers. Of course, in practice, illegal street betting has always flourished, and is now more rife than ever. In doorways and back alleys the furtive traffic goes on, wasting the time of the police and demoralizing the public.

This kind of thing has lasted so long only because people who sincerely condemn gambling have opposed reform of the betting laws on the ground that to amend them is further to legalize a social evil. But public opinion is unquestionably leaving these admirably staunch moralists in a minority, and they will have to give way to the majority's wishes.

Their denunciations of football pools, for example, however well-meant, are futile in an age when people of all ages and classes fill in their weekly coupon with an average stake of half a crown. The problem is not whether to abolish pools, but how to control them.

HERE again the Royal Commission can help. It can both suggest practical measures and drive home to the public what is still not generally realized—that pools are a form of gambling.

Many people who would be uneasy about backing a horse or a greyhound do their pools around the family fireside as a matter of course. Yet one is just as much gambling as the other!

That is typical of the confusion of mind which the Royal Commission can, if it works wisely, do much to end. And once the public faces the facts of gambling fairly and squarely, measures to control it should be easier to devise and enforce.

Morally undesirable though gambling may be, it cannot be suppressed. All experience shows that whenever one kind is stopped another starts up, and that the law rather than the "sport" is brought into discredit.

The real job for social reformers, therefore, is to study the results of gambling, and to try to ensure that the worst effects are mitigated by fair, honest laws and clear public understanding of them.

Gambling will always go in waves, according to the economic situation. It increased after the war, because there was plenty of money about and very little to spend it on. It is decreasing now, because money is tighter and there are more goods in the shops.

Panic, hysteria and "grave warnings" from well-meaning old gentlemen will not help. Common sense, tolerance and clear-headed appreciation of the facts will save us from any danger of moral collapse due to the human urge to have a flutter.

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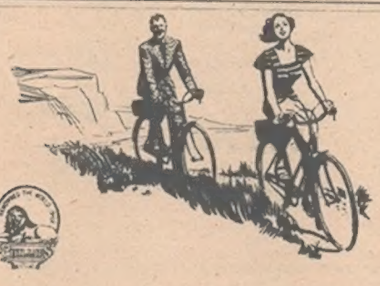

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Free Speech

UNFAIR TO NEW POLICEMEN

MANY YOUNG POLICEMEN, having completed their recruit training, find themselves posted to duty in their home town. This is unfair and does not give the new policeman a chance.

In my town I know where and at what time the bookies operate, just when and where money is tossed and I know the loose characters lurking on the street corners. I know the bus which is supposed to hold thirty and yet crowds in sixty-five workmen.

I know the bullies. Most of them I've grown up with. Once I was leader of our gang when we used to kick at neighbours' doors and so on.

Now, a few years later, having donned a uniform, I have to administer the law to these lads and lassies who have grown up with me. If I am to do my job properly I have to shut my eyes to the past and risk losing my friends. But no uniform can break down human nature. And so I avoid the places where my pals are breaking the law.

Start the new recruit off in a fresh place where the people are new to him.—POLICEMAN, *Yorkshire.*

Other Side Of The Barrow

THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO ME to be a barrow boy: I have to be up at dawn every morning (except Sundays) to get down to the markets to buy my goods. Then I have to stand and sell at the public's convenience throughout the day, often working late on Saturdays.

In my former employment, I worked twelve hours most days but, taking things on the whole, my present job is quite as hard and with longer hours. People should know that we are not all spivs, out to rob them.—T. G. FLANAGAN, 12 Buckenham Road, Pitsmoor, Sheffield.

"Foreigners"—In Our Own Land

DURING MY HOLIDAY in Devonshire, I was surprised at the attitude of the people down there towards people from the north. It seemed they don't want anything to do with us. I don't know whether it's because Lancashire folk are cotton weavers or because we talk "broad" or just plain snootiness. But I don't like being referred to as a "foreigner." How true foreigners feel, I can't imagine.—MISS J. FELL, 60 Reed Street, Burnley, Lancs.

. . . As a provincial, I've lived and worked with Londoners for several years and am amazed at their lack of hospitality and rudeness. They have not the courtesy to reply to a "Good morning." They gossip about each other. If a workmate is ill, they never inquire about his progress. If anyone leaves, no one wishes him farewell or good luck. They ridicule anyone who has not a London accent and they are thoroughly lazy and ignorant of human values.—BRITON.

Can We Do Better?

I REMEMBER when the Empire Games were held in Australia in 1938 and England won only four of the twenty events. Are we going to do better when the Games are held in New Zealand next February? I suppose a lot depends on the response to the appeal for funds to equip and send the strongest possible team.

These Games are held midway between the Olympics and are a fine opportunity to test talent under international conditions. We have a long way to go if we are going to do better in the next Olympics than we did at Wembley, and this trip can do as much as months of practice.—STANLEY RUSSELL, Imperial House, London, S.W.1.

Just A Superstition?

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I heard old folks say that, if a corpse lay unburied in a village on a Sunday, there was sure to be two more deaths before the week ended. It seemed just a superstition to me but, with few exceptions, I have noticed the accuracy of the statement for many years. —MRS. D. TUCK, Isle Bridge, Outwell, Wisbech.

Moving On The Cheap

ON WEDNESDAY of a recent week, the much-maligned British Railways collected a load of furniture in London. It was delivered intact in West Hartlepool on the following Saturday afternoon. The distance is 250 miles. The cost was less than £2. A private firm submitted a tender of £8.—WILLIAM HODGSON, 25 Duke Street, West Hartlepool.

Money And Happiness

FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS, I have been a guard in a sub-branch of a bank, sitting behind the counter and watching proceedings. Mr. N. Atkinson, who asks what form of happiness is possible without money ("Free Speech," August 6) should ask himself what form of happiness money will buy. Among our customers there are some wealthy people. I watch them come and go and none of them appears the least bit happier than I am, with just a bare living.

The clerk I work with earns at least three times as much as I do. Yet he sees nothing in life to enjoy while I am happy as the day is long. Happiness is a state of mind.—V. R. S., Dorset.

The Frog Still Lived

KILLING A GRASS SNAKE in the garden, I noticed a large swelling in it and after some careful squeezing extracted a frog. It had been swallowed whole, head first. I thought it was dead but sometime later was amazed to see it hopping around.—C. CRADDOCK, Upper Sorrels, Fittleworth, near Pulborough, Sussex.

. . . Finding a hedgehog on my doorstep I took it indoors. It seemed scared and hid, so I put some milk in a saucer in the garden and left it. Now each night about eleven o'clock it turns up, sometimes accompanied by another, to eat a saucer of milk and breadcrumbs. Where they go in the daytime puzzles me but the garden has never been so free from slugs and other pests.—E. M. THOMAS, 10 Olivetree Road, Wavertree, Liverpool.

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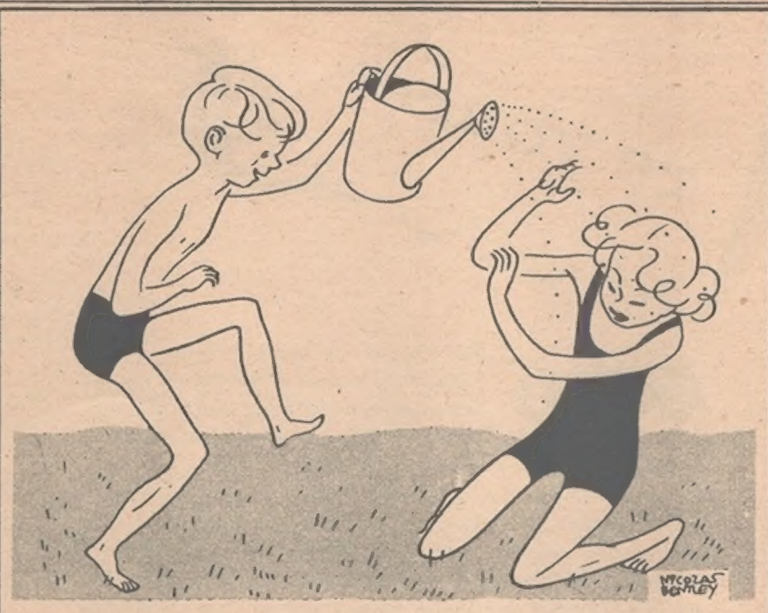

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Tension—even while they wait for a tram. In the rush and tear of modern living, many of us fall prey to the "invisible malady"

Oh to get away from it all!

by the Rev. W. E. PURCELL

It's a feeling most of us have at times. Pinpricks of the daily round plus bigger personal blows plus what may seem the hopeless backcloth of the world at large. . . . All enough to get anyone down

What's the answer? How can one keep one's nerve, stay the course—and like it?

MISS SIMMONS'S TYPEWRITER, on its desk outside the manager's office, has its cover on and has had for a long time. No one seems to know exactly what is the matter with Miss Simmons. "Breakdown" is the usual term used.

But, whatever the doctor's version of the trouble may be, the facts are simple. One afternoon Miss Simmons discovered she could go on no longer. And so she collapsed and was sent home. Now the prescription for Miss Simmons is "rest and quiet for a long time."

Not far away, in the same city, the little business of Bert Smith is changing hands. It is a good business, and Bert was doing fairly well. But Bert was convinced that he was doing very badly.

He saw ruin coming; imaginary ruin, in fact—but real to him. He began with a lot of worrying about nothing in particular. He ended with the fixed conviction that some person or persons unknown were trying to poison him.

His trouble, too, is usually spoken of as a "breakdown." And nobody is likely to see Bert for a long time. These are sad cases. But they are not unusual. On the contrary, they are so typical that many of us could easily add other examples from our own personal knowledge.

Was it just that Miss Simmons was overworked? It can hardly be that. She used cheerfully to do twice as much before the war. But she had undoubtedly begun to worry; not so much about personal things, but about the whole state of the world today.

Was it just that Bert couldn't cope with all the rules and regulations for the time being necessary in his line of business? Well, less than ten years ago he looked after his shop *and* did a lot of outside work as well. But he certainly did not worry so much.

Work, hard work, and plenty of it never killed anybody. But worry has put thousands out of action. It is today putting more people out of action than ever before, which is one reason why the shadow of mental and nervous ill-health is growing steadily longer and darker as the speed and stresses of modern life increase.

It is not an accident that psychiatry, the mental

treatment of mental disorder, has so suddenly become fashionable; very much so in the United States, and to a considerable degree here, too. The queer dream-world imagery of the subconscious, long fashionable in some art circles, has begun to creep into films, also, as in sequences like the nightmare alarm clocks and giant bottle in that brilliant British film, *The Small Back Room*, or the mental home backgrounds of *The Snake Pit*.

The need is for a cool, commonsense look at it all; not so much because of the graver cases, such as those of Bert and Miss Simmons, as on behalf of the disturbingly great numbers of those who today are in the grip of a milder form of anxiety neurosis. They worry, often sleep badly, find it difficult to settle to anything; rarely experience any of the blessedness of inner peace and quiet. This is the great "invisible" malady of our times, and it has its mysterious headquarters in the mind.

Those Busy "Leisure" Hours

The sheer pace of living has increased. There is so much to do—and so much we are able to do—in what used to be called leisure hours as well as at work.

One of the consequences of the gadget civilization which science has made possible is that the gadgets have to be worked and given mental and nervous attention. Even a radio set has to be switched on and listened to.

People read more than they used to, listen more, rush about more, buy more entertainment. Meanwhile, the blessed homemade art of just relaxing and doing nothing is in some danger of becoming a lost one.

Moreover, this pace of life has come upon us suddenly, with rocket-like acceleration, so that the speed of living has changed more in the last forty years than in the previous forty centuries, and we are feeling the consequences. It is said that professional speedsters—racing drivers, jet pilots and the like—develop a certain kind of look: puckered eyes, taut mouths.

Rather in the same way, speed of living leaves it marks. Many of us bear them. Restlessness, poor concentration, extreme varieties of mood, even chain-smoking, can be some.

Life Gets Too Complex

Complexity, another important strain-producer, is a somewhat different matter. Its opposite is simplicity, as in the phrase "give me the simple life." The trouble is we are not getting the simple life; we are getting a very complicated one, crammed with too many things to think about, too many ideas, points of view, emotions, excitements.

It is noteworthy that New York, speediest and most mechanized of cities, has a bad reputation for breakdowns and suicides. Here in Britain, far more of us live in town than country, and thus are particularly subject to this complexity strain, which is greater than the load or stress we were designed for.

What we *were* designed for, conditioned to over many centuries of gradual evolution, was work based on the prime essentials of getting food and shelter amid the steady rhythm of the natural world, one season following another with massive inevitability.

Nothing will ever bring that back now. But it does help us to realize that it was the stresses of that kind of life, rather than those of the urbanized, music-while-you-work existence which the Great Designer allowed for in the human blueprint.

If it were possible to turn the mind upside down and empty it regularly, like the bag of a vacuum-cleaner, many of us would be astonished at the complicated rubbish which would fall out, the bits and pieces of modern life, phrases from the news, fragments of films, sports results, tightly wrapped up personal anxieties, memoranda about calling at the County Hall for a licence or at the radio shop for a new valve, mounds and mounds of it.

The bag is bulging, rarely cleared, and every day we stuff in some more! Is it surprising we should feel the stress now and then?

Next as a strain-producer comes anxiety, a mental state partly caused by the complexity and pace of life; but also very much aggravated by the quite special conditions of recent years.

This very troublesome form of anxiety has to be clearly distinguished, if we are to understand it, from merely transient worries, such as may come over us when the children are late in from school and we wonder if they have been run over.

When We Lose Our Nerve

That passes with the cause. But anxiety as meant in the technical term "anxiety neurosis" goes on and on and is not about anything in particular so much as about everything in general.

Those are its characteristics. It is a vague, greyness of forboding floating about in the consciousness. It is a loss of the nerve necessary for living.

Two special features in life today, by a chance and unhappy co-operation, have produced circumstances exceptionally favourable to anxiety neurosis. The first is not only that "the world is too much with us, late and soon," but that modern means of passing news around from high-speed press to radio and television have enormously increased in effectiveness, and appetite has grown with what it is fed on.

The whole field in which anxieties can crop up has been widened to the margins of the world. Is it any wonder that some nervous systems crack?

This is precisely what happened to Miss Simmons and Bert. Miss Simmons was naturally highly strung. She was also well informed, imaginative, conscientious, and in middle life not very fit in health.

Suddenly, the whole strain of living became too much. She had had it.

Bert was perhaps a more stolid type; but for years he had been under enormous extra stress; his business was bombed, his son went to the war, he himself did a great deal of Civil Defence duty in addition to his ordinary job.

And then, when it was all over, things weren't any easier. They were harder, more complicated. Eventually, the years of strain exacted their price.

What then, can we say to those who worry, who are conscious today of all this strain? The first need is to recognize clearly what is the only thing which can bring relief. It is peace. Not the peace of the tombstone, a dead thing based often upon indifference. Not even necessarily the peace of the world, with an absence of sirens going off in the night.

The tremendous need is for peace inwardly, in our hearts. And that can come only from one source: from God, as "the peace which passeth understanding."

It passes understanding for so many nowadays just because so many are out of touch with the religious approach to things. But the great and simple truth to grasp is that not one of us is big enough or strong enough to take the whole weight of the world and its worries upon our own unaided shoulders.

A Hand To Steady Us

We can't do it. We never could properly take even the weight of our own personal cares without the feeling that somewhere there was a great hand not only to steady us when we stumbled at life's rough spots, but also someone who wanted to help, was able to, and was concerned to see that we got along all right in the end.

That, the basic comfort so often lacking today, lies deep at the root of much nervous disorder. No psychiatrist can give us this comfort; no fatalism, the "if my name's on it I've had it" attitude, is an adequate substitute. It was Jung, world-famous psychologist, who said this:

"During the past thirty years people from all civilized countries have consulted me. Among my patients in the second half of life, that is to say over thirty-five, there has not been one whose problem in the last resort has not been that of finding a religious outlook upon life. It is safe to say that every one of them felt ill because they had lost that which the living religions of every age have given their followers and not one of them has yet been healed who did not regain his religious outlook."

It boils down to this: you are not going to put the world right by worrying about it. I'm not either. We are not going to put even ourselves right.

Peace That Men Can't Mar

We must realize our limitations and be content trustingly to leave to God, who has brought mankind by a wondrous way from primeval mud to the height of modern achievement, the overall decisions as to our future.

We must even leave ourselves to God, concerned only to do an honest job for Him with the life He has given us for a while; living kindly, honestly, patiently; as simply as possible, and trying to see that when the time comes for us to leave the little bit of the world which has known us, it will be the better, and not the worse, for our having been there.

Quite a few years ago, when I had just started work in a great city, I was much comforted by some lines which came into my head at a worrying time. Maybe they will serve some folk equally well now:

Calm Soul of all things, make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,
That there exists a peace of Thine,
Man did not make, and cannot mar.

TEN YEARS AFTER

TEN YEARS AGO the second World War began. What was the *real* position in men, munitions, diplomacy and morale? What were we up against?

As battle succeeded battle the truth was fragmentarily revealed. Captured documents and interrogation of enemy leaders have helped, partly, to fill in the picture.

And now Captain Liddell Hart is writing, ten years after, a series of thorough revaluations of each of the war's great crises. His articles will appear exclusively in JOHN BULL.

The first of his outstanding analyses, sparing nobody, is entitled:

THE GREAT ILLUSIONS OF 1939

The military and political leaders of 1939, the very men whose deeds he unflinchingly examines, had no doubt of Liddell Hart's stature.

Dill, B.E.F. commander and later Chief of the Imperial General Staff, called him "the best military critic of the day." Guderian, creator of Germany's armoured forces, described himself as "Capt. Liddell Hart's disciple in tank affairs." Von Reichenau, who took Warsaw, said: "He is setting new rules."

Soviet Ambassador Maisky told Lloyd George: "We regard him as the best military brain in Britain."

And Winston Churchill declared: "Liddell Hart has immensely stimulated technical and professional thought."

But Liddell Hart in his brilliant new appraisal does not spare Churchill. *He spares nobody.*

His first article on the major crises of the war, "The Great Illusions of 1939," appears exclusively

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

How long can Franco last?

He tried to be "one of us," and was rebuffed. Now, he's out in the cold—but still confident in a new crisis

by JOHN MAYNARD

GENERAL FRANCISCO FRANCO is Humpty-Dumpty of Europe. For ten years, since revolution put him on top of the wall, he has perched there precariously. The war, which most people thought would shake him down, failed to budge him. The peace, which most people were sure would shatter him, has left him still on top.

The Communists hate him; the majority of the anti-Communists disapprove of him. Exiled Spaniards plot against him; Spaniards inside Spain plant bombs for him. And U.N.O. keeps him at arm's length.

But still Humpty-Dumpty does not fall. It is as if he had discovered the secret of keeping himself at the top not by support but by universal opposition.

I talked with a Spaniard in Madrid this year. He was a man who had fought for Negrin's Republican Government all through the civil war. After the rebel victory he escaped to France, where he lived in exile for several years. Now he is back again under the terms of the Franco amnesty. Provided he keeps clear of politics, he thinks, he will be watched but left alone. I asked him if he thought he could keep the terms.

"One person in every six is a policeman in this city," he said. "But I'm not a Communist and I have to live. I still dislike the régime as much as I disliked it from France, but things looked a little different beyond the Pyrenees. Now that I'm in Spain once more I find that I'm a Spaniard first and a Liberal afterwards."

Can't See Alternative

In substance, that was the summary I got from many Spaniards I spoke with. Most of them heartily detested their Government, but saw no alternative to it.

Nobody can visit Spain for even a few days without becoming aware of this apathy. It is everywhere and among all classes, and is so striking that a few months ago an American Senator mistook it for morale.

"There will be no revolution and no monarchy," an intelligent Catalan told me. "In Spain nobody thinks more than a few weeks ahead. The only thing that happens, and will keep on happening in this country is Franco."

General Francisco Franco has been the supreme ruler of his country for ten years. He is the *Caudillo*, the Leader of Spain by the Grace of God, as anyone can read on the latest Spanish coins. The great majority of his countrymen, like my Catalan friend, think he will remain their leader, with or without the Grace of God, for as long as he keeps alive.

Franco himself seems to agree with them. He no longer plays the rôle of the "Liberator," the young general who rescued his country from anarchy and paganism. Mellow, affable and calm, he now likes to pose as the father of his people, the sagacious patriarch who will protect them against the designs of a scheming world.

Franco at the races: his new pose is as the "mellow, affable father of his people." Beside him is his wife

This presentation, from a Spanish point of view, is fairly convincing. Spain was kept neutral while all Europe was at war: internal strife was avoided and Spanish independence, which is a vital concomitant of Spanish pride, was preserved by what the world must ruefully admit was a series of astute diplomatic victories.

And, in fact, it is as the statesman rather than the military man that Franco presents himself to Spain. When he meets the public he gets neither bombs nor overwhelming acclamation. The police take care of the bombs and Franco's heavy, rather pedantic personality discourages great enthusiasm, even from his most fervent supporters.

"He looks like a business man going to a convention," said an American reporter disgustedly, "I expected a sort of hidalgo tycoon."

Franco is neither an hidalgo nor the betasselled, pot-bellied little goblin of the cartoons. He is a shrewd, ambitious man who manipulates his power carefully and coldly, with none of Hitler's bluster or Mussolini's musical comedy antics.

Unlike both these men, Franco is not a *parvenu* with a history of frustration and social failure. He finds it perfectly natural to be the leader of the military hierarchy into which he was born, and by whose standards he has inevitably ordered his life.

He was born, fifty years ago, in the garrison town of El Ferrol, in Galicia. His father was in the navy, and brought up his sons to despise civilians and respect authority, caste and the Church, a code to which the young Franco easily conformed.

After graduating with honours from Toledo Military Academy, Second Lieutenant Franco pestered the authorities until he was sent out to Morocco, where Spain was fighting the interminable war with the Riffs. From there, after four years of campaigning, he returned to his home town with all the essentials of a rising young officer—the rank of major, a decoration for bravery, and a bullet in the abdomen.

He had also acquired a reputation for "firmness." On one occasion a regiment threatened mutiny and Franco was sent to make inquiries. The trouble, he found, was the food: the men had complained of its vileness. One man even threw a bowl of soup in Franco's face.

Another meal was ordered and this

Franco as yachtsman. At fifty, he is not "the betasselled, pot-bellied goblin of the cartoons, but a shrewd, ambitious man who manipulates his power carefully and coldly with none of Hitler's bluster or Mussolini's musical comedy antics"

time the men were satisfied. Franco then lined them up and, after some soldierly advice, told the man who had insulted him to break ranks and take two paces to the right.

The man obeyed. Franco drew a revolver and shot him dead.

This sort of gesture was in the best tradition and Franco, who showed military abilities of the first order. soon found himself the commander of the Spanish Foreign Legion. At thirty-two, he was the youngest general in Europe, but hardly the most popular.

A brother officer who was with him at the time describes the small, impatient, moody man as "sniffing at glory as, it might be, at a flower." Glory—at a price that cost Spain dear—was soon to come.

Primo de Rivera, Spain's dictator, came out to Morocco and ordered hostilities to cease. The war, he protested, was bleeding Spain to financial death. That was not the sort of language that Franco understood. He rallied his officers and defied de Rivera.

It was his first attempt at rebellion and was entirely successful. The war went on and the Riffs were finally defeated at the Battle of Alhulcemas, where Franco and his Legion wrought commendable carnage.

When Alfonso Left

In 1931 King Alfonso was forced to leave his country; Republicans came to power and military careerists, however glorious, were looked on with acute suspicion.

Franco signed a pledge of loyalty to the Republic and immediately organized plans for its destruction. He joined the Right Wing front of Fascists, royalists, landowners and Church; he was a vigorous member of the officers' junta which, when the time came, would choose him as its leader.

Meanwhile, he was banished to the Balearic Islands. The inactivity and the good living began to take the edge off Spain's "youngest general."

"He was like a gun dog in the close season," said a man who was with him at the time.

The "close season" ended in 1934 when the Asturian miners revolted against the Rightists, who had followed the Republicans to power. Franco was recalled to restore order.

He arrived with his Moors and set about the task with his usual energy. The towns of Oviedo and Gijon were destroyed: thousands were shot, and Franco received the congratulations of his Government and the nickname of the "Butcher" from a mourning and embittered people.

After the Asturian revolt events traced the familiar Spanish pattern. Repression from the Right inspired unity in the Left, which, in turn, led to the usual military conspiracies, in which Franco began to play an increasingly prominent part. Now Chief of Staff, he organized the army not, as was traditional in Spain, as a defensive weapon, but as a mobile striking force.

Accident and luck are said to have played a great part in Franco's life. In Morocco, a bullet shattered the bottle he was raising to his lips; his rapid promotion during the Riff War was due to fantastic casualties among his brother officers.

Leader By Accident

His star stayed loyal in 1936. General Sanjurjo, who was to have led the long-planned military revolt against the Popular Front Government, was killed in an aeroplane, and Franco, flown from exile in a British charter plane from the Canary Islands to Casablanca, found himself the leader of the rebels. In two and a half years he was the master of Spain.

Against all predictions of disaster, and in spite of daunting political and economic difficulties, he has remained its master ever since. Now, in what promises to be a crisis year for his country, he seems to be still immovably in power, and Spaniards are asking themselves how he will deal with a situation that, even for Spain, has almost reached the saturation point of hopelessness.

"We are absolutely alone," a Spaniard I met in France told me. "Franco gambled on being invited into Western Union, and on a massive American loan. He lost. Now he is like the commander of an army of occupation who can no longer feed his men off the country he has held down. He has scraped the barrel dry."

This description of Franco as the commander of an occupying force is apt. Spain does give the impression of a country lately devastated by war, although it is ten years since Franco entered Madrid.

There is an atmosphere of rot and rust; railway carriages are old and rickety, half completed housing estates peter out in weedy waste ground, and ruins are everywhere. Even on the deserted military roads in the Pyrenees the concrete is cracked and bulging.

The air of shabbiness and neglect is heightened by the presence of well-fed smartly clothed police and Civil Guards who mince about, as someone said, "like sleek house cats on a rubbish dump." There are about 100,000 police in Spain and Franco's army, the second largest in Europe, numbers 300,000 men. It has no modern tanks, artillery or engineering units. There is not a single radar installation in Spain and the air force consists of a few prewar French and German machines.

"We have a wonderful secret weapon," the Spaniards joke to each other. "Some Powers are developing pilotless planes; Spain has something much cheaper and more surprising—a force of planeless pilots."

Last Hope Gone

As long as Franco could pose as the last bastion in Europe against Communism, as long as Spain seemed to be a strategical proposition for the defence of the West, Spain could hope for help and recognition.

Now that the Powers realize that the only defence against Communism is the economic and political unity of Western Europe, Franco, who has played all the numbers, must rely on the resources of his country.

Even to such an optimist as Franco, they must appear discouraging. In a country of twenty-eight million people, of whom more than seventy per cent are agricultural workers, his grandiose schemes of social economy and industrialization have created a bureaucratic chaos in which corruption is the only stable element.

In Madrid a private company can build a huge football stadium with cement supplied by the Air Ministry, while in Barcelona thousands of people live in caves. Not even in Belgium two years ago did I see such luxury in the shops as I saw in the Spanish capital, but the Catalan factory worker must pay eight of the ten shillings he earns a day for two pounds of bread.

Spain's plight has been worsened by the persistence of one of the most disastrous droughts in living memory. Early crops have failed everywhere; in parts of Aragon the people are bartering wine for water, and in a country that used to export wheat, it is thought that nearly two million tons of foreign corn will be needed to avoid a state of near-famine in 1949.

Confronted by this crisis, Franco appears to be as confident as ever. He is sure that opposition to his régime is weak and disorganized.

Sick Of Violence

Above all, he knows that the civil war that he himself brought on Spain has left such exhaustion, such a hatred of violence, that any attempt at revolution would be met by horror and apathy.

In his estate at El Pardo, near Madrid, the *senorito*—"the neat little bloke," as the Spaniards call him—lives the life of a contented family man. Bland and corpulent in his Scotch tweeds, fondling his English spaniels, he gives the impression of a man who is at peace with all the world.

But, seen against the background of his ragged country, it is difficult for the foreigner to believe, as the huge posters proclaim, that "Franco is intelligence, Franco is efficiency, Franco is authority, Franco is will power, Franco is honour, Franco is faith."

No power on earth

by ALASTAIR SCOBIE

ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL RAINER

There was a question Judge Blaney didn't want to ask; a question he was afraid to ask . . . a question he *had* to ask

MR. JUSTICE BLANEY, having heard the evidence, pronounced the prisoner guilty and sentenced him to death. Of course the result of the trial had been a foregone conclusion; the well-muscled, lazy youngster who lounged between his armed guards in the dock had confessed his guilt almost cheerfully. Yet the Law is the Law, and a confession unacceptable by itself when the offence is murder.

So the Justice sat, without a jury, a wig or a gown, in bush shirt and shorts, through the damp, trying heat of a Central African afternoon, and heard the evidence.

Justice is not new to Africans, for did not the Old Men decide guilt or innocence, with much formality, before a white Baas ever set foot in Africa? A trial is a matter for deep talking and discussion, much philosophizing and moralizing, wise words and prosy speeches. So has justice always been done in the kraals.

So Mr. Blaney heard all the evidence, relevant and irrelevant, listening with unfailing patience, speaking only through his interpreter, although he understood every word and aside of the musical, clicking language of the witnesses. But at last it was over.

"Baas," said the prisoner-at-the-bar, "I have been a bad man. Hang me, baas, for my wickedness." He did not seem the least upset. In fact, Kawena, known as Joseph, considered the whole trial a waste of time and wanted to spend the hours remaining to him in a cool cell, eating the good jail food.

For a moment Mr. Justice Blaney hesitated. He knew from his twenty-five years in Africa the vast difference between his own mind and that of Kawena the murderer.

Kawena, who walked in a sun-lit world peopled with the spirits of the dead, where there was no fortune or misfortune that was not caused by some influence, malignant or benign.

"What is justice?" thought the white judge. Then he spoke for the first time in the Chizuru tongue—for he would not let that terrible sentence come from the mouth of his interpreter, who was all too willing to pronounce it.

"Kawena-known-as-Joseph. I have heard the facts. On the night of April the fifth this year you placed a deadly poison in some calabashes of beer, which you knew were to be drunk next day in the kraal of Chitemba in the Chizuru District of Palmerston, where you live. You did this with evil in your head." That was the nearest possible translation of the words, "With malice aforethought."

"I did, baas, I did. I am wicked, so I have told you," said the prisoner.

KAWENA, you will not say what wickedness prompted your act. But for the doctor-baases many people would have died, because the doctor-baases acted promptly, only one died, the man Taroni. Kawena, you tried to poison a whole village full of people. Men say you were ill-used, but even so it is unjust to make many suffer for one. The man Taroni, who was a good man, is dead. There is but one man who could save you, the man who told you to place the poison in the beer, but he is unknown and you will not name him." For the first time the prisoner seemed uneasy, dropped his soft brown eyes from the grey, cold eyes of the judge.

"Kawena, in the name of the Great King, whose Headman I am, I say you shall be hung up by the neck until you die, and I ask my God to be merciful to your spirit, that you shall not suffer in the world beyond the grave."

It was a good translation, the nearest one could get to the formula.

"Ja, baas," said Kawena. "What I did was wicked, and I must hang." He smiled to friends in court, waved to the weeping women from his kraal (some of whom had nearly been the victims of his crazy poison plot), and went off to the cells that stood in the lush, flower-filled garden outside the courthouse, like separate little brick houses.

Mr. Justice Blaney, who was profoundly moved by the hateful task of sending a fellow human being to his death, took off his spectacles, suspended the court and went to his hotel. He knew, as did every African in court, how Kawena had come to kill Taroni, yet there were strange aspects to the case, things one did not talk about in court.

Mr. Justice Blaney bathed and dressed in white linen for the evening. He felt suddenly old and frail and helpless, a man faced with a problem that defied solution, that threatened his own most precious

"Ja, baas," said the waiter. "Taroni took Kawena's bride." Blaney caught him by the jacket. "You lie"

beliefs and left him helpless in the face of a power he could neither accept nor explain. He had to know, he told himself, he had to know about Kawena and Taroni. He could not sleep in peace until he knew.

As the Justice sat in the bar, sipping a long drink before dinner, the sun was going down in its inevitable chaos of crimson, orange and gold, the veld was bathed in the dull red glow and the giant baobab trees writhed like devils against the wild African sunset.

In the bar the hotel proprietor, Jack Clancey, late of Bermondsey, was lighting the petrol lamps, chatting to his customers, miners and farmers from the Palmerston District which the town served. He greeted the Justice effusively.

"Nasty business you 'ad there, Mr. Blaney. Proper nasty business. A boy will either want to die for you or murder you in your bed. Proper savages. Always were, always will be, and that's a fact."

"Yes, Clancey, that is so," said Mr. Blaney, who did not agree with a word the hotel-keeper had said. The real murderer, he thought to himself, had been the man who told Kawena to put the poison—it was common arsenic and no native concoction—in the beer.

And no power on earth would drag that man's name from Kawena's lips. For Blaney knew from what he had heard that day in court just what had happened at the kraal of Chitemba. There was but one question remaining unanswered in his mind. He sipped his drink, reconstructing to himself the crime as it must have happened. . . .

" . . . two hundred and thirty-six . . . seven . . . eight . . . "

A MORNING in late March in Chitemba's village. The men laze in the shade, lords of creation, hunters, relieved by modern civilization of the need for hunting, warriors with their battles far behind them. They have sent the women off to work for them, the young men to tend the herds and now they laze and talk as Africans should.

Kawena, who is later to hang, comes from his hut, tall, good-looking, with a deep golden-brown skin, calls to a friend:

"I see you, my brother."

"I see you, Kawena."

"Come and smoke a pipe with me, friend, there is much that I wish to discuss with you."

The two friends sit smoking in the purple shade of a hut, its walls pink mud, the strong mud of a deserted ant-hill, its thatch roof shining golden-brown in the hot sun.

Kawena draws on his pipe, watching the chickens scrabble in the dust.

"My brother. Know you, I would take a wife."

The other man nods, spits into the red dust of the place.

"Then, brother, I wish you to be my *dombo*, the go-between who shall arrange my marriage with my bride and her parents."

"If it is your wish, Kawena. And the woman?"

"Runa, the mission girl, who is also called Jenny, daughter of Baureni."

"Very good, Kawena. I will carry your message to the girl and to Baureni. What bride-price will you pay? The woman will need cattle for your children when she is old, the father will need payment for his daughter."

"I will pay ten cows and ten pounds in money. I will work for a year in the white man's mines, and bring back the ten pounds from my pay."

"It is good, Kawena. I will speak to the man and his daughter, and tell them what is in your heart."

On the veranda of the Palmerston Hotel, Blaney smoked his pipe. Now it was dark and cool and the trees sighed after the heat. The smell of Africa was around him, sweet, heady, intoxicating, the smell of the oxen and the woodsmoke, the flowering trees and the dusty veld. A baboon barked in the darkness. Soon the great moon would rise above the kopjes on the horizon where the fires twinkled from the kraals.

The storytellers around the kraal fires have one old theme. It runs through African story as strongly as does the eternal triangle through the writings of Europe. It deals with the faithless *dombo*—the marriage go-between who swears to act for a friend and instead seduces the bride. Blaney had no doubt that it was this simple tragedy that had come into the life of Kawena, known as Joseph. And Blaney knew, too, how "Mr. X" had entered the story, the unknown man who had persuaded Kawena to poison the beer-pots. Blaney could imagine him. He had seen many of the breed.

Not an old, withered man, terrible of aspect, hung about with monkey's skulls and lion teeth. Just an ordinary, servile African, timid, courteous, secretive, like . . . yes like that very waiter who was now bringing Blaney another long drink. Middle aged, ragged, intelligent, very like the waiter. Kawena would go to him. Blaney easily imagined the conversation.

IT is outside another hut in the kraal. The *Nga-nga* is dressed like other people; there is nothing to show that he follows the prescribed profession of witch-doctor. He sits on a straw mat brought out by one of his wives. From a skin bag he takes his divining bones, his pots of magic ointment. He throws the bones casually, studies the patterns as they fall.

"Kawena, a witch has done this. A witch has entered your *dombo*, and he has seduced your bride. Kawena, beer will be drunk at your village this weekend."

The Chizuru men go home from the nearby mines every weekend and their women have the sweet white beer ready for Sunday drinking.

"Kawena, you must take this *muti*. It is white man's medicine, and powerful." Now here was a problem. Did the witch-man know he was giving Kawena arsenic? Or did he have the usual blind faith in the power of all the white man's powders and medicines, from aspirin to penicillin, from pink pills to paludrine?

"Take this *muti*, Kawena. Place it in the pots of beer when the beer is outside to cool. Only the witch will die."

Kawena goes home, the arsenic in the pocket of his ragged khaki shorts. From the evidence he had heard that day Blaney knew what had happened next.

The women make the beer on the Saturday and leave it to cool. Kawena does as he is bid, and places arsenic in the calabashes. Then Sunday comes.

As is the custom, Chitemba drinks first, deprecating the poor quality of the beer the women have made, then passes the ladle to his guests. They take the ladle and drink deeply, praising the quality of the beer, the generosity of the headman.

Chitemba first feels the pain, a burning in throat and stomach. He is an old man and he gasps the word, "Poison," a word every African knows and dreads.

A woman runs to the police post at Palmerston Junction, an ambulance comes bumping at speed over the rough track to the kraal. At Palmerston Native Clinic the doctors grumble at the interruption of their Sunday golf, get to work. They work hard to save the victims, so hard that but one man dies, the man Taroni. And the killer, overcome by what he has done, runs to the police post and begs to be hanged.

So much Blaney knew. But was the dead man, Taroni, the faithless go-between who had seduced Runa, the daughter of Baureni? For if Taroni had not been an innocent victim, but the seducer, then no wonder Kawena faced the scaffold contented. Had he not avenged himself on his enemy? And if Taroni was the guilty man, well . . . it brought up that question Blaney did not like to think about, how Kawena's vengeance, pursued through the old magic of his people, had filtered through even the skill of the doctors at the Palmerston Clinic and found out the guilty man. It was an uncomfortable question, and one no power on earth could answer. Blaney had an uncomfortable feeling that Taroni had been the guilty *dombo*.

But he must know. Somehow he must know.

There was a soft voice at his elbow.

"One shilling, sikkispence, master."

It was the middle-aged waiter, with his drink. Blaney fumbled for coins, and for a second he looked into the eyes of the man.

It is rarely that the eyes of African and European meet, and the waiter, after holding Blaney's glance for a split second, dropped his eyes to the tray, on which Blaney placed one and ninepence.

"Thank you, master. Thank you very much."

The native turned to go. On an impulse Blaney called him back.

"Boy, what kraal are you from?"

"The kraal of Chitemba, baas."

"Then you knew . . . Taroni and Kawena."

"I knew them, baas."

"Tell me, was Taroni the go-between in arranging Kawena's marriage?"

"Baas, I do not know."

The eyes were blank now, as if a shutter had been pulled down to hide the man's thoughts. Blaney looked at him steadily.

"I must know, understand? I must know. Was Taroni the guilty man?"

The waiter smiled, a confident smile. He was on his own ground with the great baas who brought justice. He spoke softly, secure in the power of his own people and their faith.

"Ja, baas. Taroni was he who took Kawena's bride."

Blaney caught him by his clean, tattered jacket.

"You lie, Kaffir."

"I do not lie, baas."

Blaney felt suddenly limp and defeated. It was as he had thought. Somehow, somehow inexplicable and sure, the justice of Africa had reached out and killed Taroni. Arsenic had poisoned him, though the other people who had taken that beer had lived.

The doctors had saved them, who could not save the guilty man, Taroni. It was as though the witch-man had foreseen what must happen.

"Tell me," Blaney asked, "why Taroni died even though the others lived? How did the *Nga-nga* reach him?"

THE waiter fumbled with his tray. "Baas," he said, "I do not understand these things. But know that Taroni was the guilty man. He knew he had done Kawena a great wrong and that the spirits would be angry with him. He knew he was bewitched. When he felt the pain he knew he must die. So Taroni he died."

Blaney looked angrily up at the waiter.

"He died of arsenical poisoning," he said, "not of faith."

"The others did not die, baas," the waiter said gently, as though he were teaching something to a small child who is stubborn and will not learn. "Kawena did not kill Taroni. The witch-man whom you suspect, baas, he did not kill Taroni. There was not enough arsenic. The others did not die, baas. But Taroni did. Yet the ambulance was a long time getting to my kraal."

Blaney looked up sharply.

"Not enough arsenic? How d'you know that?"

The man straightened up, and a subtle change came over his eyes. They were again the veiled, inexpressive eyes of the kaffir "boy."

"Come along now," Blaney said, though already he could see that he would learn no more. "Come along now. How do you know so much about the arsenic?"

"They talk in the kraal, baas," the waiter said. "I say only what is known."

His eyelids drooped a little, and for an instant, Blaney saw something more than a waiter, something more than a middle-aged, ragged, servile African. . . .

Suddenly a big Cockney voice yelled down the veranda: "Tickey! Where are you, you lazy scoundrel? A baas here wants a drink."

"Coming, baas, I come," shouted back the waiter, and went pit-patting off on his naked feet towards the bar.

Factory workers in Leningrad. The man who arrives twenty minutes late for work is an "unstable element." His punishment—the forced labour camp

RUSSIA'S SLAVES : THE TRUTH

by EDWARD CRANKSHAW

The brutal fact is that Russia depends on cheap prison labour to keep its industry running. So the slave camps go up and "offenders" are found to fill them. Here, an expert on Russian affairs describes how the Soviet forced labour system works

ANYONE WHO HAS MOVED about Soviet Russia at all extensively, not on conducted tours but on business, must find the solemn discussions about whether or not the Kremlin goes in for forced labour unreal to the point of lunacy.

For him, the fact of forced labour is not the end of his inquiries; it is only the beginning. In a variety of forms it is so much a part of the system that until you have accepted this fact and got it into perspective it is impossible to begin to understand the system.

Acceptance is easy. Outside Moscow, Leningrad and a handful of other show towns in the west, you find yourself bumping into it everywhere you go; and the familiar grouping of barbed wire, a straggle of wooden huts, lofty wooden watchtowers surmounted with searchlights and machine-guns, is an integral part of the Russian landscape.

Under Armed Guard

Gangs of ragged prisoners performing the heaviest manual labour in all weathers, digging a canal, laying a road, levelling an airfield, all under armed guard, are so commonplace that in sensitive moods you have the feeling that you are driving over the bodies of innumerable dead slaves.

At the same time, almost every Russian citizen you have anything to do with seems to have a friend or a relative who has "gone away."

The atmosphere of arbitrary arrest and bodily insecurity is in the very air you breathe. One day a friend or an official is no longer to be seen; you ask after him, and nobody knows where he has gone, or seems in the least interested. So you stop asking.

Occasionally the conjuring trick takes place in full view. In a North Russian city during the war I had a good deal to do with an interpreter, a dapper, rather flashy little Russian Jew with a beautifully trimmed beard.

One day he was not at his office. No, he was not ill. He had gone away. Nobody knew when, if ever, he would be back. Nobody cared.

Ten days later I was watching a gang of scarcely human figures breaking heavy logs out of the ice just below the river bank and I heard my name called, very softly. There, muffled in tattered sheepskin, his black beard streaked with ice, was my little Jewish interpreter.

"You see I've changed my job!" he muttered out of the corner of his mouth. "Don't say a word, but drop me a cigarette when the guard isn't looking!"

That was the mildest form of forced labour. In the Codex recently published by the British Foreign Office it is called "corrective labour at the place of employment." If he behaved himself, my little Jew would probably toil away at that killing job for six months and then be returned to interpreting.

Nobody would ever know what he had done wrong. He himself might never know. He might be there because he had made a blunder in his work, because he had showed too much interest in the foreigners for whom he interpreted, for getting drunk on a present of vodka and arriving late at headquarters, or simply because the local chief of police needed a labour gang and did not like Jews.

I dropped a half-filled packet of cigarettes when the guard was not looking and saw my friend slowly edging nearer; but he never looked up at me again, and so I left him to it.

In the severer forms of forced labour there would have been more guards, and if my friend had been so rash as to call out to an onlooker or stoop to pick up a cigarette he would have risked being shot dead on the spot under the general head of attempting to escape; it would all depend on the guard. I have seen that happen, too.

Again, in the severer kinds of forced labour you are sent away for years to the remote Arctic north, and your chances of return, unless you are as strong as a horse and lucky into the bargain, are very low indeed.

All through the long Arctic winter you will toil unremittingly in the gold mines, the graphite mines, the platinum mines in killing frost, returning at night to sleep in rags on shelves in wooden huts.

The Feeble Die

In summer, when the top surface of the frozen soil becomes a morass, when the temperature soars to tropical heights, and when the whole landscape is obscured by vast clouds of mosquitoes which stretch for scores of miles, it is almost worse.

You have to work because your meagre ration depends on it. And if you are too ill or too feeble to fulfil your daily norm, then your ration is diminished accordingly, which makes you feebler still, until you die.

This life is dragged out in an

atmosphere of absolute and arbitrary tyranny under the camp commandant, who holds over you the power of life and death, and who is empowered by statute to choose from his prisoners the common criminals to guard you. Because, in Russia, the murderer and the thief is treated less harshly than the political prisoner — the "class-hostile elements," or the "unstable elements among the workers." The murderer or thief has committed a crime against the individual; the political offender has committed a crime against the State.

And the least crime against the State is apt to be considered as far more dangerous than the blackest crime against an individual.

In this picture there is more of Russia than of the Soviet régime. The arbitrary rule of the Secret Police, arrest and deportation without trial, forced labour in intolerable conditions, the use of common criminals to oversee "politicals," and the corrupt tyranny of degraded camp commandants—all these belonged to the tsarist days; and the best and most harrowing descriptions of life in the labour camps are still those of the tsarist writers: of Chekhov, for example, in *Sakhalin Island*, and of Dostoevsky in *The House of the Dead*.

Brutal, But Casual

The harshness, the often accidental brutalities, the arbitrariness and the corruption are all fundamentally Russian as distinct from Soviet Russian; and they are to some extent offset by the casualness and laxness, the loopholes in the regulations, the frequent kindnesses—so totally foreign to the German concentration camps.

Also, where Russian prisoners are concerned, some of the things that would seem to us (and do seem to foreign prisoners in these camps) the last word in degradation, appear only as unfortunate but probably unavoidable inconveniences. That applies not to the most rigorous forms of forced labour, which are intolerable even to the toughest Russian, but to the lighter categories.

I shall never forget a Russian friend, who had been missing for some months, suddenly turning up in Moscow, thin, but bronzed and well, full of a story that seemed to him extraordinarily funny. The story was that he had been arrested by mistake, tumbled out of bed in the middle of the night, and driven off to a forest two hundred miles north of Moscow.

No Hard Feelings

There, living in conditions of extreme squalor, he was put to felling trees, which he did, very inefficiently, for four months, utterly cut off from the world, and with his family thinking they had seen the last of him for ever.

But in due course the mistake was discovered, and he was shipped back home with a warm apology from the camp commandant, but with no other acknowledgment at all, to resume his old life.

Instead of filling him with bitterness and resentment, it struck him as a first-class joke.

But having made all allowances, and having got it firmly into our minds that forced labour may mean anything from a few months' emergency woodcutting in a local forest or digging a drainage ditch outside one's own town, to a living death in those desolate regions where no man would live of his own accord, and at the end of interminable journeyings in cattle-trucks, torn away from home and family for ever—having made all allowances, the fact remains that forced labour in the Soviet Union is a blot on the twentieth century; and so long as it persists the claim of the Soviet Government that it has created a workers' paradise is hypocritical to the point of wickedness.

Furthermore, forced labour as practised in the Soviet Union today is something much more than a lingering relic of the tsarist terror; so much more that it amounts to a new and terrible evil in itself.

EDWARD CRANKSHAW, the writer of this article, was born in 1909. He first visited Russia in 1941, when he was sent to Moscow on special duty with the British Military Mission. During the war he travelled widely in Russia and published his experiences in his book *Russia and Britain*. He was demobbed from the Army as a Lieut.-Col., and in 1947 he joined the diplomatic staff of *The Observer*. In that year he revisited Moscow to cover the Foreign Ministers' Conference, and shortly afterwards published his second book, *Russia and the Russians*. Crankshaw has also written two novels and a book on Joseph Conrad. He is married and lives at Sandhurst, Kent.

As far as can be seen there are three important motives behind the whole system of forced labour in Russia today: security, labour coercion and economy.

The motive of security is the only one admitted by the Soviet Government (which, unlike fellow-travellers in England, has never attempted to conceal the existence of forced labour as such). In the Corrective Labour Codex of the Russian Federated Republic, recently tabled at Geneva by the British Foreign Office, the preamble opens as follows:

> The task of the penal policy of the proletariat during the period of transition from capitalism to socialism is the defence of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist construction being carried out by it against the encroachments of class-hostile elements and infringements not only on the part of the *déclassé* elements but also of unstable elements among the workers.

There is no doubt at all that in its first beginnings forced labour was introduced purely as a security measure. That is to say, something had to be done with the thousands of individuals hostile to the Revolution; and the most sensible thing was to set them to work — even to try to regenerate them through work.

But security today, though still an important motive, can only take second place—unless the Soviet State is in such a shaky condition that it still counts its internal enemies in millions. Since those early days of comparative innocence, two things have happened: first the need for coercive labour laws, and secondly the growth of a vested interest in cheap labour.

The coercive labour laws have proved necessary because of the idle temperament and erratic character of the Russian worker, coupled with the excessive demands of the Five-year Plans and the need to cure the Russian of his immemorial habit of wandering from job to job, from place to place, looking for better conditions.

The Corrective Labour Codex makes specific provision for the erring worker. The punishment for absenteeism is six months' corrective labour at the place of employment (which may mean anywhere within the worker's home province). Now, absenteeism does not mean staying away for whole days, it means being late by a matter of minutes. In a Supreme Soviet Decree of 1934, absenteeism is defined as follows:

> A workman is guilty of absenteeism if he loses more than twenty minutes' working time by arriving late, leaving early, or extending his dinner-break, or if he commits any of these offences three times in one month or four times in two consecutive months, even if the loss of time in each case is less than twenty minutes.

These are the "unstable elements among the workers"; and that is how the workers are kept in order in a country where the State is the People and the People are the State, and where the trade unions have had to abandon their proper functions because there are no longer classes with conflicting interests—but only lazy workers who imperil the existence of their own State—of the People, that is to say—by their anti-social habits.

But this sort of thing only touches on forced labour in its mildest and most temporary form. What we normally mean by forced labour today is the mass consignment of ordinary men and women to vast concentration camps, or "corrective-labour colonies," either individually (as in the case of Soviet citizens picked up by the police for real or imaginary offences against the régime), or in great droves (as in the case of transfers of population from newly absorbed territory, or from borderland areas where the loyalty of the inhabitants in a crisis may be suspect, or during one of the periodical purges).

These prisoners may be put to work in the forests, in the mines, in the fields, in factories, or on great constructional undertakings in the remotest parts of Russia, such as the digging of a canal, the making of airfields, the building of a new city.

And they may either be hired out to existing State institutions, as the British Government hired out German prisoners during the war and after; or they may be employed by the "Home Office" itself, the M.V.D., on its own commitments, which are immense.

300,000 Prisoners

The M.V.D. not only runs and governs the whole of the dreadful region of the Kolyma goldfields in the extreme north, it also owns a whole series of factories concerned with secret war production; while even as far back as the early thirties, the Soviet Press was celebrating the completion of the White Sea Baltic Canal, built entirely by prisoners (at least 300,000 of them at one time) under the direction of Yagoda, the head of the M.V.D.'s predecessor, the G.P.U.

It is easy, thus, to see how the emphasis has moved from considerations of security to considerations of economy. Once an institution like the M.V.D., which is police, prosecutor and judge combined, is given control not only of the fate of millions but also of their labours, and once it has built up an elaborate system for the employment of those labours, a vested interest is created which it is very hard to break.

This has happened with the M.V.D., which is now more interested in perpetuating its own tremendous prison labour system under G.U.L.A.G., or the State Directorate of Camps, which it runs, than in security as such.

This means that the demand for more prison labour is constantly increasing. And there is nothing that Stalin can do about it, even if he so desires.

Slaves Are Expendable

Once upon a time he might have put a stop to it, but today the whole budgeting of the Soviet Union would be thrown out of gear if suddenly all forced labour were to be abolished. For there is hardly an aspect of Soviet industry which does not depend, at least sometimes and in some measure (in the timber trade and the mining of precious ores in an overwhelming measure), on cheap labour which can be regarded as expendable.

This is the vicious circle. This is what happens when the State starts riding over individual rights with no very clear idea of where it is going—above all, when the State is Russia, with an age-long custom of arbitrary rule, with no tradition of habeas corpus, and faced with the desperate task of industrializing at a breakneck pace a backward agricultural country with its economy in ruins.

There is a horrible inevitability about the whole process which has the quality of high tragedy. It is not possible to see how it will end, though it is all to easy to see how it began.

Fish are such soothing pets

Watching fish swim in a tank is an ideal way to calm nerves. The hobby has excitements, too. Such as what to do with a fish that *will* stand on its head • *by RICHARD COLLIER*

FROM A WORLD in which worry has practically achieved the status of a disease, ten thousand bold explorers have found a way out. They are united by a common belief that the proper study of mankind is fish.

They can be sub-divided roughly into 120 different societies, ranging from sturdy groups like the Nottingham Club, 150 strong, to exclusive coteries like the Twenty Club, whose name defines the limits of its membership. The veterans are inclined to favour the specialist groups, such as the Goldfish and the Guppy Breeders' Societies, and all of them are presided over by an institution known as the Federation of British Aquatic Societies.

But even the Federation's secretary, R. O. B. List, a tall, scholarly looking electrical salesman from Kingston, Surrey, is dubious as to just how many British fishkeepers—or aquarists, as they prefer to be called—there really are. He says: "There must be hundreds of them that we've got no means of tracing, mucking about by their own little ponds and tanks and perfectly happy on their own."

Some of these enthusiasts, like List himself, nourished a boyhood passion for sticklebacks, and found in later life that a well-stocked fish-house was their spiritual home. Others only discovered later that watching fish could be wonderfully soothing, and sought an escape from the woes of the world in the rearing of guppies and Hi-Goi carp.

Keeps The Children Quiet

List has found them particularly useful in his own home, not only to calm his own nerves, but to stave off domestic discord.

"If I get in at night, tired and irritable," he says, "I spend a quarter of an hour by the old tank and I'm as right as rain.

"It's the same if my little girl gets fretful. I strap her in her high chair and make her watch a tank of livebearing toothed-carps. It works wonders."

Not only does it work wonders in List's family circle, but, according to reports he has received from doctors and dentists, it works wonders in their waiting-rooms as well. Watching tanks of fish has long been a part of neurasthenic treatment in some American hospitals, and recently the idea has caught on over here. The tanks are wheeled round the wards on surgical trolleys for the benefit of those patients who are inclined to be touchy.

Since the tank is usually presented by one particular society, there is always a weekend rota of enthusiasts to check the state of the fish and to ensure that they are thriving as well as the patients.

Recently one society received a personal visit from a hospital matron: she said she couldn't thank them enough, and that "since the tiddlers arrived the patients had been no trouble at all."

Aquarists are divided into two distinct groups—those that keep their fish for show inside the house, and only choose colourful fish, like the "neon," and those that keep their fish in ponds, or in a special fish-house, with plenty of mud and weed.

Most aquarists, says List, prefer fish-houses to ponds: constructing a pond requires a good deal more time and manual work than the average enthusiast can spare. And even when he has constructed his pond and filled it with fish there is little he can do about foraging enemies like the water scorpion and the water beetle.

One aquarist, who had several tanks of fish in his house, decided to expand his collection and constructed a pond in his garden. No sooner had he finished the job and laid on the water than he discovered it had been adopted by a heron—a magnificent sight, but certain death to any fish he might have around. Faced with such a problem he eventually sold all his fish and took up bird-watching.

The True Aquarist

Typical of the true dyed-in-the-wool aquarists who spend most of their time in the seclusion of their fish-houses, from which they are only coaxed forth on rare occasions to expound their views on the "balanced" tank or to judge a group of lyre-tails in a show, is Robert G. Mealand, a Putney plumber.

Mealand is not a boyhood enthusiast grown a little older, but a man who tried stamps, photography and many other hobbies, to find them all wanting. But sixteen years ago, when he started fish-keeping, he found he had hit on a hobby that not only soothed all his leisure hours, but threatened to monopolize his entire working day as well.

A little bustling man, with a shock of greying hair, Mealand will expand on the beauties of his hobby till the small hours of the morning. Enthusiasts ring Mealand up at seven fifteen in the morning and past midnight to discuss their problems. Mealand says, succinctly: "The family aren't as keen on it as I am."

He adds: "The glorious thing about this hobby is that it'll suit any pocket. Anyone can become an aquarist of a sort if he's got a couple of quid, and yet one bloke I know of has just spent £400 alone in building himself a fish-house."

The aquarist's first requirements are simplicity itself—a 24-in x 12-in. x 12-in. tank, costing about £1 10s., 28 lb. of subsoil sand to line its bottom, ordinary tap water (which should be boiled first to remove any chlorine present) and a balanced variety of water plants: arrowheads to supply oxygen, ambulia to give the fish cover and Indian fern to provide decoration.

"Clouds" On The Roof

It was along these lines that Mealand started stocking the fish-house that he had converted out of an old shack at the bottom of his garden.

He painted the glass roof with "summer cloud," to exclude as much light as possible, since fish, he says, object to too much light, and "register annoyance" if the electric light is switched on and off too much.

He says: "I don't carry it to the extremes of one bloke I know, though. His light-switch is specially graduated so that it takes several minutes for the room to become fully lighted. He says the fish like it better that way."

Fish are easy to feed. Spinach and garden worms are very acceptable

With the question of heating the problem becomes slightly more complicated. The fact that Mealand has "cold-water fish" in his fish-house—goldfish, golden rudd, golden tench—which can live just as easily in ponds, makes little difference.

Any fish, he says, becomes livelier and eats more in a seventy-five degrees to eighty degrees temperature, although most of them can stand a wide fluctuation of temperature over a long period. "But just let it fall to, say, thirty-two degrees quickly and they'll all turn up their toes quicker than light."

Hot water pipes connected with an outside boiler run through the Mealand fish-house, and these he supplements with immersion heaters, which are graduated by a thermostat. One man that Mealand knows has rigged up a heating system of paraffin car heaters. Others, more prodigal with their money, have gas jets actually playing on the bottoms of the tanks.

One of the things that apparently troubles an aquarist least of all is the problem of what to feed his fish. According to Mealand it need cost surprisingly little—fish regard chopped-up garden worms as particularly acceptable, although "if you want to be pricey, there are water fleas at 2s. or 3s. a tin, mosquito larva and tubifex worms, that come from sewers." And Mealand's fish are also partial to dried egg, spinach and Bemax—"I have to grind it up small or the little ones would choke over it."

Occasionally, worried novices approach Mealand with quite a variety of feeding and digestive problems. The most novel that he ever encountered was posed by a woman who claimed that her goldfish had swallowed a stone.

The fish was apparently able to eat quite well, but the stone had become fixed in its mouth, causing it to lose its balance and stand on its head in the

Gold and silver fish in the London Zoo. The goldfish is a home-bred type of carp

water. "It seems dead," she wrote, "but when touched it is still able to lurch."

The only advice that the experts could give on that one was: Lift him up by his tail and shake him.

The problem of what fish to keep in the fish-house depends pretty largely on the aquarist's pocket. Though dollar and import problems have narrowed the margin of fish available, there are still forty-odd distinct species of tropical fish from which he can choose, ranging from the minute guppies (9d. per fry, 2s. 6d. for an adult) to the jet-black mollies (3s. to 4s. for fry, £1 10s. a good adult).

Zebra-striped Angels

The fish's personal beauty is the biggest price factor; the scintillating "neon" fish at £2 each, the zebra-striped angels and the filmy, copper-coloured veiltails all stand well at the top of the dealers' lists. And enthusiasts like Mealand often have fifty to sixty tanks, with anything up to twenty fish in each.

Mealand warns that "some dealers are often out to take the newcomer for a ride if they think they can get away with it. One bloke I knew of paid £7 10s. for a pair of breeding goldfish, and at 10s. an inch that comes a bit expensive."

Most enthusiasts are keen breeders, and the urge to cross-breed different varieties and produce fish that were never seen in any sea is exquisitely tempting. In fact, many of the commonest aquarium fish were originally man made. The goldfish is a home-bred type of carp. The golden rudd and the golden tench are merely exotic cultivations of the pond varieties.

Fish, like their devotees, fall into two distinct categories: the egg-layers and the live-bearers. The former lays the eggs when *she* is ready, and the male fertilizes them independently. The live-bearers, which conceive after the style of mammals, spawn their young alive—"as many as 146 living young from one gravid (pregnant) guppy."

Operated With Razor Blade

At such moments fish rarely welcome human interference, although Mealand recalls one occasion when it did become necessary. A gravid guppy actually died immediately prior to spawning, and the breeder performed a swift Caesarian with a razor blade, and afterwards was delighted to find that several guppies survived to tell the tale.

Another breed of fish, the bubble-nest builders, prepare a screen of bubbles before mating, and many aquarists also favour the mouth-breeders, which forgo all food to hatch their young in their mouths and suck them all in again at the first signs of danger.

To a certain extent, therefore, Mealand knows that he is safe from temptation. He can mix live-bearers and egg-layers in the same tank without risk, since they are physically incapable of mating. The difficulty arises when a breeder gets several different types of live-bearers—in one tank. Mealand knows, for instance, that he can cross a green swordtail and a red swordtail to produce a black—but should he?

He says seriously: "It's a matter for every aquarist's conscience, because nothing's impossible. If he likes he can produce a fish with its fin where its tail ought to be, and vice versa.

"He can make money out of it, too, by selling it to a dealer—someone who doesn't know anything about fish will always come along and buy it. But for my part, I wouldn't rest easy at night unless I'd destroyed the freak."

In Mealand's eyes, a bona-fide breeder should always restrict himself within the legitimate confines of Mendelism—systematic breeding that gradually eliminates the unwanted strains of the predecessor.

Complications are likely to arise here from the habits of the fish themselves. Swordtails, for instance, are prone to change their sex before the breeder has even decided what to do with them. Guppies are difficult to check on.

With the exception of angels and fighting fish, most breeds of fish are fairly placid and can live together quite peaceably under community conditions. Fighting fish on their own, in fact, are deceptively docile, and one aquarist Mealand knew, who had introduced one into a tank of platys, had his suspicions completely lulled.

Remarking that "it must be lonely," he put in another fighting fish. The platys promptly huddled together in a corner while the fighting fish tore one another to pieces.

Respond To Whistles

But such occasions are rare. Most fish are sociable, and goldfish can even be trained to gather at the same feeding-spot each day and to discriminate between whistles of a different pitch. Some goldfish become lifetime companions; unlike the majority of fish, which rarely last more than three years, they sometimes enjoy a ripe old age at eighteen summers.

One of the questions that people ask Mealand most frequently is: "How do you tell a good fish from a bad one?" Mealand, who has spent quite a proportion of his time acting as judge at different shows, admits that it is very largely experience; the judge knows instinctively the minimum body length of the fish and just how it should be looking when it is at its best. Colour and body build get the highest points awarded, while the barbels, the caudal fin and the pelvic fin are all taken into account.

The judge who may be unsure of one or two points can always refer to the "Show Standards for Cultivated Fishes" brochure, which the Federation recently issued. This also adjures the judge to pay particular attention to the deportment of the fish—"its fearlessness and easy carriage are of considerable importance. . . ."

The Real Reward

But although Mealand still delivers lectures or pronounces judgment, he does it more and more reluctantly these days, feeling that too many aquarists conspire to shatter each other's peace with fiercely contentious arguments.

Once he was a star member of the Guppy Breeders' Society; they gave him the Gold Guppy Badge, which, next to the Gold Jewelled Guppy Badge, is the highest honour a guppy breeder can attain.

But the time came when Mealand had to break away; he felt that the true aim of the aquarist, perfect serenity, was more easily attained through his fish.

In the green underwater light of his fish-house, perched on a rickety stool, Mealand finds that his fish; nowadays, give him all the solace that he needs.

He says: "I even had the radio fitted up in here—I thought at first it'd be a nuisance having to leave them when there was something on I wanted to hear. But more often than not now, I turn the programme off before it's over—it probably isn't worth hearing. I just sit here and look at them, and they swim up and have a look at me. We're all perfectly happy."

Charlie Carter's crowded hour

The seaside bored Charlie. He wanted adventure on the seven seas. So he compromised with a stroll on the pier

by JOHN DAVIES

Charlie was firm. He wasn't going to make a fool of himself on the stage. Then Louise said, "*Please*, Mr. Carter"

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER, A.R.A.

ALL THE WEEK there'd been a great deal of happy activity on the beach at Britley Bay. There'd been a prodigious building of sand castles and burying of fathers, an indefatigable tottering of bright-breeched infants under their mothers' proud and watchful eyes, an interminable foraging for seaweed and crabs and shells, an incessant trekking to the prom for ice cream and lemonade and trays of tea, while on a gentler note the deckchair brigade had got through a remarkable amount of snoozing, reading, knitting, chatting and pebble-throwing.

Among the latter, Charlie Carter had done his share. For the first day or so after arriving at Britley Bay work-weary and city-pale, he'd remained sunk deep in his deckchair, in the forefront of the snoozers. Then, perking up, he'd read *The Mad Maharajah* and *The Calcined Corpse*, had joked and chatted quite a bit with the others from "Seaview," and between whiles had thrown a considerable number of pebbles at nothing in particular. And by the end of the week he was shrimp-pink and bored.

He felt rather guilty about being bored, for the "Seaview" lot really were a jolly crowd—very jolly and sociable.

The trouble was, in fact, that they were a bit too sociable, for they persisted in sticking together all the time. Not only did they sleep under the same roof and eat at the same table, but they spent all day together on the beach, in a semi-circle of deckchairs, strolled along the prom together in the evenings, and went into the "Esplanade" together for a drink. Charlie was, for the time being, heartily sick of them all.

Now it was Saturday morning, and once more they were all on the beach together. Charlie was sitting at one end of the semi-circle, and next to him Grace, his wife, was knitting contentedly. Most of the others were asleep,

Charlie observed them with a jaundiced eye, found himself irritated by Bert Eldridge's red, round, glistening face, and by the way Minnie Plummer's head flopped over to one side when she was asleep, and, feeling he was being unreasonable, hurriedly turned his attention to the scene in general.

The beach was quieter than usual. That was because it was Saturday morning. A good many people must be leaving, and the new arrivals hadn't turned up yet. And somehow, with fewer folk about, the sea seemed to come more into its own.

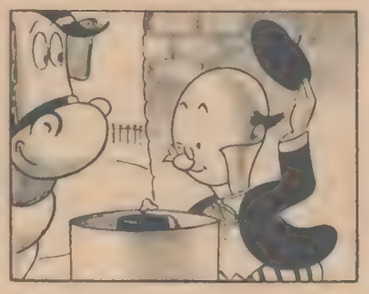
There it lay, calm and serene, stretching glitteringly to the horizon. And now, too, for the first time, it seemed, Charlie could hear the soft surge and hiss of the tide on the sand.

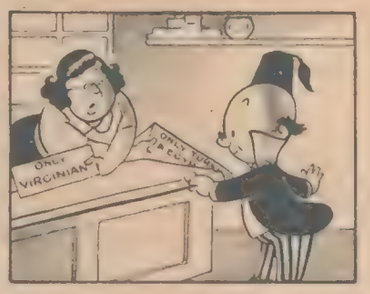
He sat for a long time gazing dreamily at the sea, and gradually there grew upon him a longing to be out there, *really* out there, not in a two-bob-an-hour rowing boat, but—well, outward bound upon some ocean-going vessel, seeking some strange and distant shore.

Nothing of the sort was possible, of course. But Charlie, after a good many years of practice, had become an expert

MR. DIMPLE

by David Hand





at compromising with his dreams. And quite simply and suddenly he made a decision.

Maybe he couldn't range the seven seas at will—but he could at least go on the pier.

Yes. He'd do that. He'd just slip away and have a stroll along the pier. By himself.

Just then Bert Eldridge grunted, woke up, yawned and said: "Well, boys—how about a pint before dinner?"

It was the custom that the menfolk of the party should have a mid-morning drink together, and Fred Wilkinson and Tom Plummer now got up from their chairs with alacrity. Charlie, however, didn't budge.

"Come on, old man! Stir your stumps!" Bert exhorted him heartily.

Charlie shook his head.

"Count me out this morning, thanks all the same," he said.

Bert affected surprise and concern.

"Eh? Come on, Charlie! If you sit here much longer you'll die of thirst!"

"No, thanks," Charlie said firmly.

Bert stared. Then he shrugged.

"Well—*my* tongue's hanging out," he said. With that he turned to the others, and they trudged off together.

Charlie let them get well clear. Then he got up.

"Where you off to?" Grace asked sharply.

"Oh, just for a stroll," Charlie said.

And he slipped away before anything further could be said. He knew he'd be taken to task later for not being sociable, but he couldn't help that.

TEN minutes later he'd paid his threepence and was on the pier. He strolled slowly and contentedly seaward. Already the air seemed fresher, and he felt wonderfully free.

There weren't many people about, and the farther he walked the fewer there seemed to be. In fact, when he reached the point where the boardwalk divided to skirt the Pavilion, there was no one in sight save a solitary young lady leaning on the rail.

She was a very personable young lady indeed. She had gloriously golden hair, and her bright summer dress revealed a figure which many men had found considerably disturbing. But Charlie would not normally have noticed her. He wasn't a lady's man. He'd never been much of one, and now he was far too old for that sort of nonsense.

However, something about the girl did attract his attention. She seemed, he thought, distressed, or at least certainly not as carefree as she should have been that lovely morning.

Charlie was observing her and wondering idly what could be wrong when suddenly, as though conscious of his scrutiny, the girl turned her head and their eyes met. And then an extraordinary thing happened. The girl started violently, stared wide-eyed, and opened her mouth as though to cry out.

Confused and abashed, Charlie hurried past, feeling sure that he'd been taken for an elderly Don Juan. The thought distressed him, and he was anxious only to get away as quickly as possible. He walked on for some fifty yards. But then, yielding to a growing curiosity, he permitted himself a backward glance.

He saw the girl staring after him, and even as he looked back she began to run towards him.

Charlie didn't know what to do, and for want of any better plan he simply strolled on as nonchalantly as he could, staring fixedly out to sea, but conscious only of the girl's rapidly approaching footsteps. In a matter of moments she was at his elbow.

"Excuse me—oh, please!"

Charlie stopped and looked at her in an embarrassed fashion, and saw her gazing imploringly at him, her hands tightly clasped. Her pretty face, it seemed to him, was excited, eager and worried, all at the same time.

"I—we—oh, *please* will you help us?" she burst out.

With that she gazed more appealingly than ever. Charlie felt very awkward.

"Eh? Help?" he said gruffly. "Well, what seems to be——"

Impulsively she took his arm.

"Oh, it would be simply *wonderful* if you would! And you will, won't you?"

"Well . . ." said Charlie.

"Oh, you're so kind! Come on—let's go and find the others!"

Thereupon Charlie found himself urged eagerly into a walk. As the girl propelled him forward, he started to ask what it was all about. But before he could get more than a word or two out, his captor had darted to a door at the rear of the Pavilion.

"In here!" she exclaimed. "They're all here, except *him*."

AS she spoke, she opened the door and went in. Charlie had perforce to follow. The girl led the way along a narrow passage and through another door, and all at once Charlie found himself in the auditorium of the Pavilion. He noticed that there were people sitting in the front row of the stalls.

A young woman down there was the first to spot them, and at once shrieked: "Oh, *marvellous*, darling! Where did you find him?"

Those in the front row turned as one, and then a man's voice exclaimed: "Thank God! Is he sober enough to be any use?"

The girl did not answer, but hurried Charlie forward. Then another feminine voice cried: "Heavens! It's *not* him!"

They reached the front of the auditorium, and at once those there crowded round.

"Now first of all you must meet everyone!" the girl exclaimed. "Here's Margot . . . Clive . . . Peter . . . Mary Ann . . . Sebastian . . . Connie—and I'm Louise. And *this*, everyone, is——"

"Er, Carter," said Charlie, completely bewildered. "—Charlie Carter."

"He looks *exactly* like Bonzo!" Margot said incredulously.

"I know!" Louise cried. "That's why I've brought him. I've had a simply shattering brainwave! Why shouldn't he be Bonzo for tonight? He could be, easily!"

The others clearly found this suggestion too startling for unpremeditated comment. There was a brief silence. Then:

"But," began Clive, "I don't——"

"I don't see why not!" interjected Peter. "After all. . . ."

He broke off, doubtful again. There was another silence. Then Louise suddenly laughed apologetically, and said: "Oh—*poor* Mr. Carter! This must all sound quite crazy to you! You see, it's like this. We're the Merrythoughts, and we're playing here at the Pavilion, and today we're in a terrible fix——"

"The plain truth of the matter," Clive interposed, "is that one of our little flock's gone off on the booze, and we're absolutely stuck without him."

"Yes," said Louise, "and we've no one at all to take his place, and you're almost exactly like him, and Mr. Rosen and Mr. Franks are going to be in front tonight, and we do so need a winter booking, and——"

Light suddenly burst upon Charlie.

"And you want me to be an *actor*?" he asked in astonishment.

"Oh—please!" said Louise. "It's only the compère's part. I know there's rather a lot of it, but he only reads it from a script. There's nothing to learn. And he's supposed to be an absolute duffer who gets everything wrong, so you could do it as easily as anything. Oh, dear! I didn't mean that! I——"

"But—why *me*?" demanded Charlie, amazed. "Surely you could get someone better than me?"

"Because you're exactly like Bonzo!" Louise cried.

By this time Clive had warmed to the idea. He said: "I think Louise has got something. People don't like substitutions—even if we had one. And with anyone else we'd have to admit a replacement, because Bonzo's picture is on all the bills. But if Mr. Carter took the part, no one need even know."

"But—but can't you look for this Bonzo of yours and bring him back?" Charlie asked.

Clive shook his head.

"No," he said. "Even if we found him, we wouldn't be able to do anything with him. Not today. It wouldn't be fair, anyway."

"He's never, never done anything like this before," Louise said earnestly. "He's only done it now because he couldn't stand things any longer. You see—he's just had some bad news."

But Charlie refused to be touched. He'd made up his mind. They could argue as they liked—it was all tommy-rot their thinking they could get him up on to a stage to make a fool of himself in front of hundreds of people.

Louise laid a hand on his arm. "*Please*, Mr. Carter," she said.

Charlie shook his head.

"I—er—well—that is—well—all right," he said.

Then he stopped, silent and aghast. What on earth had he said? He'd certainly had every intention of refusing! But he wasn't given a chance to think about what he'd done.

"On stage for rehearsal, everybody!" Clive shouted.

At once the others hustled Charlie up on to the stage, a sheaf of typescript was thrust into his hands, and the rehearsal began.

FOR some time there was nothing but chaos, and Charlie felt completely lost. But then, to his own infinite astonishment, he found himself beginning to enjoy it all. When at last it was over they all crowded round him.

"Oh, Mr. Carter, you were absolutely *terrific*!" exclaimed Mary Ann.

Charlie was at once horribly embarrassed again. He felt he'd had more than enough for a while. He fumbled in his waistcoat pocket and pulled out his watch. Then his face fell.

It was three o'clock. He was two hours late for dinner.

"Here!" he said. "I've got to be off!"

"Seven o'clock tonight, then, Charlie?" Clive said. "That'll give you time to be made up."

"All right," said Charlie, already on his way to the door.

A quarter of an hour later he arrived at the familiar semi-circle of chairs. Everyone was there except Grace.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Bert. "What the——?"

"Where's Grace?" Charlie panted.

"Back at the house. Waiting for you."

Charlie turned away.

"Better look out for the rolling-pin, old boy!" Fred called after him.

Charlie made for "Seaview" as fast as he could, and as he turned into the road he saw Grace at the front gate. Her hands were on her hips, and she didn't look very amiable.

"Where in the world have you been?" she demanded as Charlie came up.

"On the pier," Charlie said breathlessly.

"On the pier! What—all this time?"

"And," added Charlie to pacify her, "I've got eleven tickets for the Pier

Continued on page 20

THE HUMAN MACHINE

Press On!

"THE secret of a good holiday," said the Radio Doctor the other day, "is deliberately setting out to do something."

And he added: "The doing of things is the spring from which flows the fun and enjoyment of life."

A short while ago I read a remark by an American senator that seemed to me just the complement of this. "They get on best," he told his fellow senators, "who get on most."

It's all very old. It's all been known for a long time. But it's all so often forgotten.

Here is something else that is both old and overlooked: It's not activity that rusts and withers; it's stagnation and disuse.

Press on. Press on with something. Keep Active!

by ROFFE THOMPSON

Tactical lesson by Stan Cullis for young Wolves. Boys are signed on at about fifteen, get every encouragement

Cullis catches 'em young

by RICHARD COLLIER

As a boy, he was tipped by the Wolves' manager as a future England captain. Now, manager himself, he aims to see history repeat itself

SIXTEEN YEARS of League football should be time enough for any player to learn something of the pitfalls of the game. That was what young Stanley Cullis always thought, and most soccer fans, knowing Cullis's prewar record—skipper of Wolverhampton Wanderers for two seasons, "capped" thirty-one times for England—would have been inclined to agree with him.

But last year, when he laid aside the famous black-and-gold jersey and embarked on his first season as the Wolves' manager, Stan Cullis began to wonder.

Stan explains: "Being a manager means watching the game from the touchline, and watching a game is far, *far* worse than playing in it. A critical spectator sees everything—and sometimes it's better not to."

One has to view Stan Cullis, in fact, as something of a perfectionist, certainly few people outside the world of soccer would consider that he had much to worry about. Not all of them have a distinct recollection of his First Division début for the Wolves fourteen years ago, as right-half against Huddersfield Town, but few of them can forget that he was the greatest centre-half of his day.

It Seemed Natural

Even now they recall nostalgically his characteristic crouch over the ball, as he slipped a pass through to his inside men, and when he retired in 1947, announcing that he intended doing so "while he was still at the top," most of them applauded his good sense. That he should lead the Wolves to their first Cup Final victory since 1908 in his first year as manager seemed only a natural sequel to the Cullis success story.

Very early on in his soccer career, Stan discovered that footballers are not born but made—and that part of the manager's job lies in making them. Not only has he got to keep his players fit and happy, working smoothly as a football machine; he has to be constantly planning ahead, worrying about all those problems that haven't yet arisen, as well as plenty that have.

In the sixth round of last year's F.A. Cup, for instance, Johnny Hancocks, the outside-right, was still on the sick list. Half an hour before the kick-off against Albion it was still uncertain whether he would be able to play. Stan Cullis decided to try a gamble. Though Hancocks was obviously not entirely fit, he sent him on the field.

His strategy succeeded; Hancocks could do little more than hobble, but Millard, Albion's left-back, dogged him zealously all through the game. With Millard thus occupied, the Wolves concentrated on left-wing tactics, giving outside-left Jimmy Mullen a chance to score one of the season's three most important goals.

"It was pure psychology," Stan points out, "and it worked both ways. Our lads knew he was there, which helped them to feel more secure. Albion felt that they'd got to mark him just the same. I wasn't going to give them the advantage of having a spare man on their hands."

Stan's emphasis on the importance of psychology, not only on the field but in the dressing-room as well, is perhaps the key to his character. Nothing, he says, can dishearten a young player more than a lack of interest in his efforts.

One particularly good example, oddly enough, was Stan himself. As a ten-year-old schoolboy, in his home town of Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, he captained his school team. At eleven he was playing for the town team of Ellesmere Port Wednesday. Nothing, it seemed, was going to stop young Stan in his climb towards the top.

Nobody Was Interested

But when a prominent Merseyside sportsman, one T. M. Corley, began trying to interest the clubs in a teenage grocer's boy named Stan Cullis, the lack of enthusiasm seemed universal. Stan signed amateur forms for Bolton Wanderers, but after one trial game they didn't even consider him worth a professional engagement. At seventeen, Stan found himself tagged with a label—"the player they can't give away."

Stan, at this time, was beginning to feel that so far as the managers were concerned he was just a blind spot. Then Cullis senior, who had been born in Wolverhampton and always longed to return there, suggested one final shot. Why not try the Wolves' manager, the famous Major Frank Buckley, and see what he could do?

Major Buckley's policy was to catch his players young, bringing them up as a fast fighting unit to play what he called "Wolves' football." To reduce the risk of their succumbing to flu and other winter ailments, he had them all inoculated, giving rise to the profitable rumour that the Wolves' dash and vigour was due to the fact that they were all chock-full of monkey gland. Once again psychology proved invaluable; unkind critics alleged that the Wolves won several matches because their opponents automatically believed them to be better.

The Major's belief in young Cullis proved to be the turning-point of Stan's career. He gave him one trial game, announced, "This man is a future captain of England," and promptly sent Bolton £20 by way of appreciation.

In consequence, Stan pays particular attention to the problems and welfare of the younger players; if it had not been for the Major's early encouragement, he feels, things might have gone very differently for him.

Made To Feel Important

Youthful amateurs, signed on around the age of fifteen, soon come to feel part of the Wolves and to realize that it is on them that the future of the Wolves will ultimately depend.

Most days of the week Stan is in his office at Molineux Park shortly after nine, preparing to face anything up to a twelve-hour day. Apart from a once-weekly directors' conference, conferences with trainers Joe Gardiner, Jack Davies and Jack Nelson, there are endless practice matches to be fixed, trials to be arranged, amateurs

to interview and sign up. Currently, Stan is coping with the administration of seven teams, forty-seven professionals, and countless amateurs.

Routine training during the season consists of four hours' daily exercise for full-time pros and reserves, as well as nightly sessions for part-time pros and amateurs. But one of the most important items of the training, in Stan's view, occurs on the Monday morning following every match, when the team assembles for a post-mortem and the quality of each player's game is analysed individually.

Relied On Speed

Before the war, the Wolves were reckoned to be one of the fastest teams in England. Using Westcott and Dorsett as their spearhead, they developed a steady inter-play of "shooting down the middle," out-distancing their opponents by sheer dash and speed.

Under the Cullis banner, the team still specializes in swift football, but with this difference: the ball moves quickly from man to man and from wing to wing, often leaving the defence out-manoeuvred and baffled.

Stan has little faith in "style" as an easy way to win matches: the much-discussed "Corinthian" style of Tottenham Hotspur, the ball-play of Leicester, leave him unmoved. Some teams even employ scouts, to report on the style of other teams that they may be due to play, but Stan believes that a football team should be fluid and versatile, capable of singling out an opponent's weaknesses within a few minutes of kick-off time.

Stan feels that during the past season his system of planning and post-mortems really achieved results.

But he is too old a hand to imagine that soccer can always be played with mathematical precision; even with the players in their finest form, the unpredictable can still happen.

In one First Division match not long ago, a centre-forward, leaping to head a ball just under the cross-bar, missed it, grasped the bar, brought down the net and the posts as well. The game had to be abandoned. His side was winning at the time.

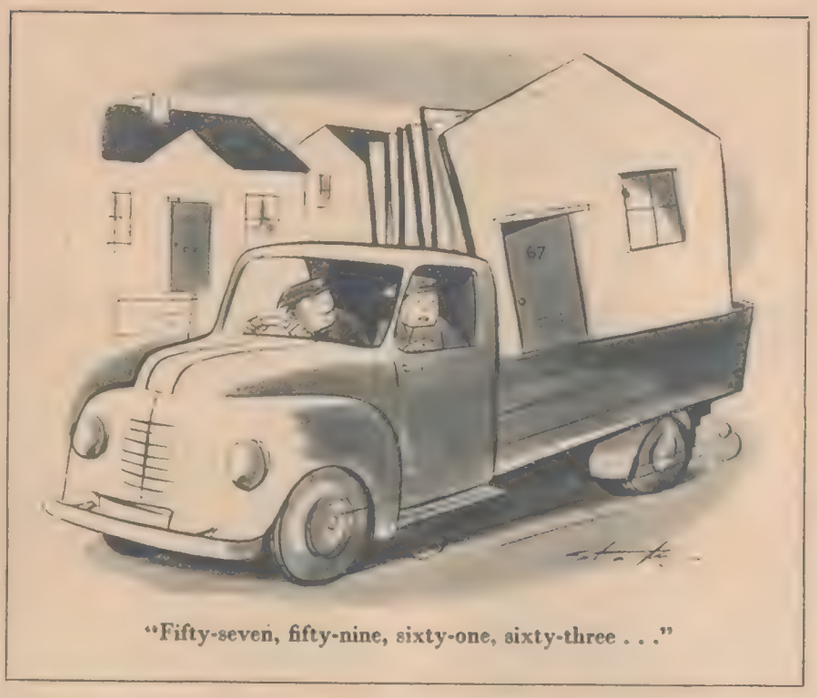
Stan has known moments like that himself. Once, in a match against Sunderland, Sunderland scored one goal—and Stan helped them to do it. He made a bad pass back to goalie Bert Williams, and one of the Sunderland men nipped in and scored

Scored For Both Sides

A similar incident once happened at a Cup Final. The score at half-time was 1—1, and the same player had scored them both—scraping a shot into his own goal by mistake, and scoring again a moment later.

Some teams believe that such moments can "jinx" a club for the rest of the season.

Stan Cullis and his Wolves have no such doubts or qualms; cool common-sense football, they believe, will bring them once again into the final rounds of this season's Cup-tie battle. The people of Wolverhampton think so, too, which probably accounts for a favourite local adage that recalls Stan's earliest years as a grocer's boy—"Stan still delivers the goods."



"Fifty-seven, fifty-nine, sixty-one, sixty-three . . ."

CHARLIE CARTER'S CROWDED HOUR

Continued from page 18

Pavilion tonight. One for everybody in the house. Front row and all."

"Tickets? Where'd you get them?" Grace asked suspiciously.

"A beautiful blonde gave 'em to me," Charlie said.

Grace stared, and, momentarily at a loss for an adequate comment, said rather lamely:

"Well—you can't count. There are twelve of us all told."

"I know," said Charlie. "But I won't be with you."

"You what? What are you going to do, then?"

"I'll be on the stage," said Charlie, "playing the lead."

IT was ten minutes to eight, with the curtain due up at eight o'clock.

Charlie felt terrible. He sat clutching his script, not daring to let go of it even for a moment. His heart was pounding like a sledge-hammer, and he'd gone weak at the knees.

Nine minutes to eight!

Charlie closed his eyes and shuddered. What a fool he'd been to get himself mixed up in a lark like this!

Louise came running in. "Wonderful," she cried. "Full house! Abso-bally-lutely jam-packed! Oh, *wonderful*!"

Then she caught sight of Charlie.

"Cheer up, chum!" she exclaimed. "I know—let's go and see if your fans have arrived!"

So saying, she seized Charlie by the hand, hauled him to his feet, and led him on to the darkened stage.

"Have a peep," she said, pointing to the curtain.

Charlie hesitated. Then, with elaborate caution, he peeped, and was at once aghast at the number of people out there. And—yes!—there was the "Seaview" lot. There was Elsie, looking at her programme, and Minnie just popping a sweet into her mouth, and old Fred looking as solemn as an owl, and Bert saying something to Grace and grinning like an ape.

And Grace? Why, she looked about as strung up as he felt!

"We'd better get off now," Louise whispered. Charlie hurriedly turned and followed her off-stage.

Five minutes!

To Charlie those last minutes were like a nightmare. Dazedly, when the time came, he assembled with the others in the wings. Numbly he saw the curtains swish aside. And then, scarcely of his own volition, he stumbled on to the stage.

He couldn't see anything, couldn't hear anything. He didn't know what he was doing. He fumbled with his script, and dropped it. Frantically he snatched it up. It had turned itself inside out. In panic-stricken haste he tried to find where it began, but the thing seemed bewitched, and all at once, in sheer bewilderment, he stopped his scrabbling and scratched his head.

A man in the audience laughed.

That laugh went through Charlie like a knife. He'd known this would happen! He'd known he'd only make a confounded fool of himself!

He began to fumble desperately with the script again, and now he managed to get it the right way out. And the moment he'd found where the wretched thing began, he gabbled away as fast as he could, obsessed by the thought that he had somehow to make up for the time he'd wasted. He galloped on furiously, turned over two pages at once, stared in blank astonishment and said, "Eh?"

There was a general laugh this time, and Charlie felt more awful than ever. . . .

THERE is no need to describe that performance further. Charlie was a riot from the beginning, at first entirely unintentionally, but later a little more by design, for all at once, in the middle of a howl of mirth at his expense, he realized to his amazement that he was doing exactly what was required of him—making 'em laugh! From then on there was no holding him.

The Pier Pavilion saw a gala performance that evening, for "Bonzo" was so droll and the rest of the Merrythoughts were so lively and gay that the audience took them all to their hearts.

There was a tremendous, clamorous crush in the dressing-room afterwards. The Merrythoughts didn't seem to be able to stop slapping Charlie on the back, and the "Seaview" contingent, who'd been invited to come backstage, were there to offer their congratulations too. Bert was there, with a comical look of utter amazement on his great red face, and Minnie just couldn't look at Charlie without starting to giggle hysterically. The others, and Grace in particular, seemed more dazed than anything else.

Then Clive came striding in.

"Shut up, everybody!" he called urgently. "Mr. Rosen and Mr. Franks are coming round!"

A minute or so later, amid a hush that might have been accorded to royalty, two fleshy and obviously opulent gentlemen came in. They smiled at the company. Then Mr. Rosen, who was, if anything, better endowed than Mr. Franks in the matter of chins and jewellery, asked fruitily:

"Who runs this show?"

Clive stepped forward.

"I do, sir. That is, for the time being."

Mr. Rosen looked at Clive calmly. Then he said:

"Come and see me in the morning, at the 'Grand.' I may have a proposition for you."

The two gentlemen departed forthwith, leaving great jubilation behind them in the dressing-room. But almost before the Merrythoughts had had a chance to congratulate each other the door opened again and a little man, who really was extraordinarily like Charlie, staggered in.

"Bonzo!" the Merrythoughts shrieked.

Bonzo tacked to the middle of the floor, and stood there swaying. Then, catching sight of Charlie, he raised a hand vaguely to his brow.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed thickly. "I thought I'd not been playing tonight!"

Charlie winked.

"You were very good, mate," he said.

GRACE and Charlie were strolling arm in arm along the pier on their way back to "Seaview." Charlie had persuaded the others to go on ahead.

It was a lovely night. Everything was very quiet and peaceful. The air was warm and still. The pier lights were reflected limpidly in the calm sea.

Grace was now emerging from her daze, to which was succeeding a sense of excitement.

"Charlie," she said, almost breathlessly. "Are you going to do anything about it?"

"About what?" asked Charlie.

"About being an actor—you might get on the wireless!"

Charlie laughed.

"Now—don't go getting ideas, old girl," he said. "Tonight was only a fluke. Anyway, what do I want mucking about acting? We're all right as we are, aren't we?"

Grace was silent a moment or two. Then, going off at a tangent, she said:

"That horrible little man! Fancy going and getting drunk like that!"

It was Charlie's turn to be silent. They walked on a little way. Then he said:

"I reckon he couldn't help it. You see, he's just had a rotten bit of luck. His wife died two days ago."

Grace looked at Charlie quickly.

"His wife?"

"Yes," said Charlie. "The fact is, these Merrythoughts are a bit of a family affair. That chap they call Bonzo and his wife were the old stagers, and the girl, Louise—you know, the fair one—is their daughter."

"Then—then she's lost her mother?"

"Yes. Poor little devil."

"But—she was so full of life! They all were!"

They were nearing the end of the pier now, and the gentle wash of the waves came to their ears.

"It's funny, Charlie," Grace said slowly, "but all the evening I couldn't help feeling that girl Louise is a bit like our Gwen would have been if she'd been spared."

Charlie squeezed her arm.

"I know," he said. "That's what got me in the first place."

Alix drew back and dropped my hand instinctively. "So that's how you spend your day off," said Grognard. He came down. I could have murdered him

Night without stars

by WINSTON GRAHAM

ILLUSTRATED BY K. J. PETTS

It was a trap. Who was in the room? Why was everything smashed up? I blundered around, feeling my way, waiting for the blow to fall. And I couldn't see. I couldn't see!

EVERY NOW AND AGAIN in the base hospital, the doctor would come and have a look at my eyes and say: "Too early yet, I'm afraid. You'll have to keep the bandages on a little longer." And I resigned myself to it. There was nothing else to do.

Rachel, my fiancée, used to visit me. She was there the day they took the bandages off, and I got my first look at her for months. It was a blurred look, but it was enough to tell me that all was not well between us. The old magic wasn't there any more.

I'd been prepared to make a grand renunciation speech. All the weeks I'd lain in bed I'd worked out the line: "You don't want to be saddled with a blind man. . . . If the eye improves in a year I'll ask you again. . . ." And so on. Now it seemed it wasn't coming off as billed. Rachel had fallen for a lieutenant in the Navy.

Well, that was that. I went back to partnering in the solicitor's office. I played a bit of golf until my eye got worse again. Then I went to see Halliday, the surgeon. He hummed and hawed a bit, did the routine tests, then told me he wasn't satisfied. The operation had left a scar that was now tightening and pulling the pupil out of shape. It might never grow worse; on the other hand it might.

I began to get really fed up with things. My sight *was* getting worse. I tried to disguise it from people and from myself, but it was no good. And then I remembered the Wintertons, friends in Beaulieu, near Monte Carlo. I wrote to them, and they invited me to stay for the winter.

I went, passed a few leisurely weeks sunning, gossiping, drinking cocktails. Outwardly, everything seemed fine. I was just a gent who was a little short-sighted. Inwardly, it wasn't so good. I knew I was going blind, and it was doing queer things to me psychologically. I had to get away and be by myself for a bit.

I did just that. After a while, I landed up in Nice. I walked a lot, thought a lot, and got steadily more depressed. One day, I went to buy a new pair of shoes. Trying them on, I walked a few paces, then couldn't find the way back to my seat. I stumbled over a stool and went flat.

The girl serving me thought I'd fainted, and there was a minor panic, but at last I got out, somewhat shaken, and had a quiet drink at a café opposite. The fall seemed to settle it. There seemed nothing for it now but to wait for the guide dog and the white stick or—or end it all.

At this point, the girl from the shoe shop turned up. It was her lunch hour and she came and had a bite with me. She was an intriguing girl called Alix (married, as it turned out) and I found myself making a date with her for Saturday night. All right, I told myself, whatever happens I'll stay alive till then.

Alix was certainly good for my morale. On Saturday, we talked and dined, and I began to see more of her and to learn more about her. Her husband, Jacques, was dead. He had been a Resistance leader.

I also met a friend of hers (a very intimate friend, it seemed), one Pierre Grognard, to whom I took an instant dislike.

He was a large, flashy type, owned three expensive restaurants, and hadn't, it would seem, been too uppish about serving the Germans during the Occupation.

Pierre didn't greet me as a long-lost chum, either. After I'd been out with Alix a few times, he came to my apartment and warned me off his "property"—Alix.

Alix's reaction to this was rather unsatisfactory. She let slide the "property" aspect, and said he'd acted childishly. I couldn't understand the set-up at all, but as questions about him seemed to annoy her, I didn't pursue the matter.

One day, out sailing, we ran into a storm and made for Villefranche, where Alix's mother-in-law lived. Mère Roget,

as she was called, ran the Café Gambetta. It seemed Alix had told the family about me, and I thought I sensed a certain hostility, but we spent the evening genially enough, and took the last bus back to Nice.

I learned something else, too. Alix told me that Pierre's restaurants had been the means of getting information from the Germans. He had been her dead husband's closest friend, and a member of his Resistance group.

PART III

News from Home

ONE day there was a letter from Cousin Lewis. "Dear Giles," it ran.

"Thanks for yours of the 19th. I saw a Treasury official about your case yesterday, but he was not too helpful.

"Permits can only be issued on health grounds if it can be shown that the condition of the patient's health necessitates his going or staying abroad. The most obvious case is that of a man with tuberculosis needing to winter in Switzerland. But his view was that the condition of your eyes was something which would remain the same anywhere and, therefore, there was no grounds for a permit being issued.

"Of course, we shan't leave it there, but I don't know if it will be possible to get the decision altered. My own suggestion is that you should come home and consult Halliday again; he might be able to pull strings that we can't, as you're a war victim. If you are set on remaining, perhaps there is some possibility of your earning some money out there. I don't know if Chapel, the consul, could help you in this, but there must be occasional legal work to do with the consulate.

"I had a letter from Parker the other day, and he has definitely decided not to rejoin the firm. This is a disappointment and his place will be difficult to fill.

"You don't mention the condition of your eyes, but your letter suggests they are not good. It may well be that the constant bright sunshine is bad for them and that a little London fog would rest them and bring about an improvement. But then, no doubt, you know best how you feel. Mother is keeping well, thank you, and sends her kind wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Lewis."

The typing was double spaced, but I had to get Old Larosse, the concierge, to read it to me.

I TOOK John Chapel and his wife out to a meal.

John said: "All the information we've got, old boy, is that things will get worse instead of better. What's going to happen when sterling becomes convertible I don't know. The rosy-faced boys in Westminster seem to think it won't make any difference. But my guess is that every country in Europe—as well as some outside—will demand payment in dollars the minute they're entitled to it. Then there'll be a crisis and all the Westminster boys will have to eat their words. Obviously it's going to be more and more difficult for Britons to live abroad or travel abroad unless they can earn money as they go."

"I don't know why everyone is so anxious to come away," said Kay. "I long to see a bit of England."

"Those who are in want to get out and those who are out want to get back. That's the way it comes, old dear. You shouldn't have married an empire builder."

She gave a little laugh. "Is it builder or liquidator these days?"

John said to me: "There are some still carrying on the old Max Intrator trade. I expect you've discovered that?"

"The barman at the Bouquet d'Or hinted as much, in a subtle manner."

"Did you swallow the bait?"

"Not yet."

"Well, I shouldn't. If you want to fiddle, do it with pound notes, not cheques; you haven't got to sign 'em."

Kay said: "Are all consular officials as helpful?"

John shifted in his chair: "I'm only giving sensible advice to an old school friend. I wouldn't give it to every good-time playboy. They don't need it anyhow. . . . Of course, everything's heading for chaos. The war's put Europe in the crazy situation of needing a non-European currency to keep the wheels going. By the way, Giles, if you want to spend your time in France, why don't you get tied up with our export drive. If you can only do that a grateful Government will lavish sterling on you. Aren't there any strings you can pull?"

"I've never been much of a string puller."

"Get Cousin What's-it to go through the family clients for you: there's sure to be one these days who's exporting typewriters to Belgium or bottled pickles to the Alpes Maritimes. It's only a question of getting to know."

I said: "I wonder if we export tin cups and mouth organs."

There was a faint embarrassed pause.

John said: "My dear old boy, blindness is a minor disability compared to what some of the people I meet are suffering from."

"But John told me you could see a bit," Kay said.

"I can see a lot," I said, sorry now to have brought the thing up.

They went on for a while, asking what specialists I'd been under, etc. I had a feeling they were glad to get on a topic where there wouldn't be any sparks struck, so I let them plug away.

There was an air of strained cheerfulness about them tonight that suggested unmistakably a squabble not long blown over.

Later we went along to the Municipal Casino and gambled a bit, and I met a slim-built, sophisticated youngish man called Charles Bénat whom John said I ought to have much in common with, seeing that he was one of the most successful lawyers in Provence.

Bénat said: "If your friend has been a lawyer he'll know that isn't difficult. It's always a matter of deciding at the outset which of two litigants is the bigger rogue."

"Or has the more money," I suggested, in the same tone.

"But never, I suppose," John said, "taking into account the merits of the case."

"Absolutely fatal," agreed the Frenchman. "It's entirely a matter for the judge, who, of course, decides solely on the legal technicalities. . . ."

We chatted amiably for a few minutes, and then he left. I could tell they thought him pretty important, and when he moved away John said:

"Don't be deceived by his flippant way of talking. He's a big shot around here. Everybody knows Bénat."

We went on into the baccarat room, where John lost 3,000 francs and I won 150. Not an auspicious evening.

TWICE more to the Café Gambetta in Villefranche.

The first time everything was fine. Mère Roget still kept her distance—she was very much the martinet in her own home—but the others welcomed me practically as one of themselves. Among the friendliest were Roquefort the fisherman and a man called Scipion. Scipion had fought with the Free French in the invasion of Normandy and had lived two years in England, so that made us virtually blood brothers.

He fancied himself as a military strategist, and I could hear him moving wine bottles and ash trays about to illustrate his points. He'd got a duodenal ulcer, and all the fight went out of his voice when he told me about that. Roquefort was a specialist in butterflies and spent nearly all his spare time watching them or catching them.

It was a queer hobby for a fisherman, and they pulled his leg about it, but he was in deadly earnest; and someone said his collection was worth 100,000 francs.

Alix seemed to get something out of seeing me welcome among her friends and relations, otherwise I shouldn't have gone again. I knew the strength of family ties in France. The more I saw of them all, the more I felt that the Delaisse family was at the back of the Alix-Pierre arrangement. Right at the start I'd thought Alix's feelings for Pierre weren't really quite as warm as she tried to make them. Our own friendship couldn't have gone on if they had been.

Altogether I seemed to be working my way out on a limb, and could see no decent way of retreat. If a marriage of convenience had been fixed up between her and Pierre Grognard—not so much to blot out Jacques's memory as to perpetuate it—my showing up on the scene could only complicate life for everyone.

To the Delaisses I was an obstacle and a pitiable nuisance; to Alix I was an unsettling influence plucking at her affections when they were better buried; to Pierre I was an object of bitter jealousy just because I was unsettling Alix that way. The only reasonable thing really was to cut the entanglement right out and go back to England to a life of comfortable dependence and semi-invalidism.

But so long as there was a chance of going on as we were I hadn't the guts to do the operation for myself.

The third visit to Villefranche was quite different from the other two.

As usual, the idea was Alix's. We'd walked out from Nice about two miles, and suddenly she said, why not go on to Villefranche, have a drink there and get the last bus back. I said all right, if she felt like that. The place was busier than usual, it being a Sunday, and as we turned into the rue St. Agel there was the sound of singing from the bistrot on the opposite corner. At the Café Gambetta someone was playing a concertina. The rusty music and the babel of voices met us as we went in.

"Go on into the inner room," Alix said. "I'll tell Mère Roget we've come."

I went in, pushing through the jingling bead curtains, and Gaston, who happened to be there, stumped across and led me to an empty table. Now from the first Gaston had been one of the friendliest. Last week he'd stood for ten minutes leaning on an empty chair telling me how he'd lost his leg; a customer had had to bang on a table three times before Gaston would move. Tonight I could hardly drag a word out of him. It was "yes, m'sieu," "no, m'sieu"; and "but certainly." As soon as he could he hobbled away.

The inner room was much quieter than the outer one tonight—in fact, there were only four people in the room: Uncle Henri Delaisse, a fellow called Dramont, another called Jean Roux and a man addressed as Rastel. None of them spoke to me, but I soon picked out each voice for myself. I wondered what the devil was wrong. They'd all been talking freely a minute before I walked in.

The boy Maurice came in, and I ordered the usual *coup de blanc* and lit a cigarette and waited for Alix. After a minute or two the conversation loosened up, but it was self-conscious stuff, about a cycle race that was going to come off in a couple of days.

Then the concertina stopped in the outer bar, and I suddenly realized that there was someone else in this room.

It's surprisingly hard to cheat a blind man. He gets to hear and identify the slightest sounds, for no one ever stays quite still. He almost always knows when people are near him and what they are doing.

But this was the stillest sitter I'd come across. He could hardly have moved a muscle and certainly wasn't moving now; it was only because the concertina had given out for a minute that I heard his breathing, which was quiet enough, but with a just-detectable and distinctive tick-tick sound at the back of the nose.

At first I thought of saying something, but decided against it. If somebody didn't want to be sociable it was really not my affair.

GASTON came limping across from the kitchen. "Mère Roget has some special wine to offer you, m'sieu, and would like you to come into the kitchen to take it."

"Very well." The inner room wasn't for me tonight.

As I got to the kitchen door someone came out and stood on one side to let me pass. I thanked him, but he didn't speak, so I couldn't be sure that it was Armand Delaisse.

Things were a bit distant in the kitchen, too, and we left fairly early. On the way home Alix, for the only time ever, talked too much. She was bright and lively, but the brightness didn't ring true and there was a jarring note somewhere.

In the end I said: "Look, Alix, dear, you don't *need* to be the life and soul of the party. In fact, there's no party and I'd rather have you in your depressed mood than—this way."

She stopped. "This way?" she said. "I don't know what you mean by 'this way.'"

"Oh . . . slightly over-anxious to convince yourself that you don't care a damn for anybody."

She was silent a bit, faintly whistling through pursed lips. "Why should I have to convince myself of what I know to be the truth?"

"Why indeed? If it is the truth."

We walked along some way. She gave a little irritable flick at her skirt. "I don't think you understand me as well as you think you do."

"I don't think I understand you at all."

"You find me—unreasonable?"

"Very rarely."

"But often enough. . . . I wonder you trouble to come out with me."

I said: "You know why I come out with you. That's not at issue. . . . If tonight for some reason you'd like to find something to quarrel about, go right ahead, but don't expect me to help you."

"I think you're helping me very well."

I thought it out. "Yes, I suppose I am."

We both laughed, but it was still a bit half-hearted. She said: "When you're angry you are like a tall mathematics professor out of the Sorbonne."

"God forbid."

"And when I'm angry . . ." she stopped. "When I am angry I'm my natural self—because then I care for nobody, as you said—except myself—and that's the best way."

"Is it?"

"You don't know everything, Giles."

"No . . . I don't know everything."

She changed the subject then, and there were no more sparks; but there was something different about her all that night.

We'd arranged to meet on the Monday, but she rang up making an excuse. We put it off till the following Monday, and I think she would have got out of that if it hadn't been a long-promised date to go to Monte Carlo. I wondered how

we should meet, if the mood of Sunday night would carry over the eight days between. But when we met there was no sign of it at all. She was a bit subdued, but at her nicest—and that was saying something.

We went by train in the afternoon—one of those diesel trains with the driver in a raised cabin in the roof. When we halted at Villefranche she said:

"Giles, I think I must stop meeting you." I'd been expecting it, but it was a jolt all the same.

"Think so?"

"It isn't fair to you."

"I'll look after that side of it."

"No. It's not fair to any of us. I have told Pierre that I'm not seeing you any more. If he finds out there will be trouble."

"Don't you want to go on seeing me?"

"Should I have lied to Pierre if I hadn't? But it can't go on for ever. There must be a break, Giles. Perhaps in a——"

She stopped.

"What were you going to say?"

"Nothing. It's for the best that we should give this up."

"I suppose nobody's suggested that you should give Pierre up instead?"

"My own feelings have suggested it."

"Then . . ." I swallowed. "If you can say that. . . ."

The diesel engine started with that sound like the tired battery of a motor car, and we moved slowly out of the station.

I felt happy and miserable together. I said: "Listen, Alix."

"Yes?"

"I'm no use to you because of my sight. I can't expect any woman. . . . But at least there's no compulsion for you to throw yourself away. Pierre's not good enough for you. There are other men in the world—plenty of them. Don't sacrifice yourself just to please your first husband's friends——"

"Why d'you say that?"

"It's pretty plain, isn't it? You don't really love the man. The marriage is tied up with the Delaisse family: they look on Pierre as—as an old comrade of Jacques—a rich man, a comfortable and seemly match for little Alix."

She said after a minute: "Well, aren't those all good reasons?" It was as if by saying over their arguments I'd strengthened their case instead of my own.

"No, they aren't if the man is a man like Pierre."

"What's wrong with him?"

I shrugged. Facing it, what was there? A mild personal antipathy. "You loved Jacques Delaisse, you say?"

"More than anything in life."

"Then don't spoil his memory by taking a man you don't care for."

"That can't spoil his memory."

SUDDENLY I was angry: "You told me the other night I didn't understand you as well as I thought. Well, I tell you again: I don't understand you at all. I'm crazy about you—you know that—but I don't understand. You've got me completely beaten."

She didn't say anything. There was no anger in her today. The train stopped at another station, but I didn't know what it was and didn't care.

I said: "Surely, there's someone of your own family to advise you? You're not really one of the Delaisse family."

"I'm proud to belong to it."

"Aren't there any of your own blood alive?"

"I've told you. I have a brother in Dakar. There is no one else. I am a Delaisse."

Off again, gathering speed with a deepening dynamo hum, the sound pressing back upon itself as we drilled into the mouth of a long tunnel.

"You musn't be crazy about me,

I jumped back in a panic. He fell full length. The smell of his clothes told me it was Grognard; he was dead

Giles," she said in a softer tone.

"At least you can't stop that."

"No. . . . Perhaps I don't want to stop it. But I hate to think of hurting you."

"I'll take care of that, too."

"I am sorry I had to tell you this now. It will spoil our day."

". . . Whatever else, I'd like to finish up this business between you and Pierre."

"Let's not talk about it any more. It is something I have—made up my mind to. You can't alter it, dear Giles. None of us can alter the past."

"We can change our *view* of the past—according to circumstances. If we don't it may push the present out of shape."

"Oh, well . . . we shall see. Forget it now. Let's try to be happy as we have been other days."

WE tried to be happy. When darkness fell we were sitting on a seat in the garden of the casino. It was the warmest evening there had been for some time, and the smell of mimosa was everywhere.

Alix was sitting with her legs curled under her. She said: "I don't think today has been as good as the others. Let's go home."

"So this is really goodbye?"

". . . It must be."

After a bit she said: "I don't know if I've done more harm or good by interfering in your life. If it's harm, then I'm sorry."

I put my hand over hers. "What's a broken heart among friends?"

"No, I don't want you to joke. Tell me."

"I don't feel like joking. Believe me. All I can tell you is that I don't want it to end like this."

Her hand was half clenched, and I slowly unbent the fingers and kissed the palm.

She said: "How would you expect it to be easier ended if it ended any other way?"

There was a sudden silence. "I don't want it easier ended."

"Then ended. . . . No, Giles: it wouldn't do. Everything would be infinitely worse."

"Nothing could be worse than it is."

She uncurled her legs and sat up. We said nothing for a bit.

I offered her a cigarette and she took one. Her hand fumbled as I lit it.

"I think perhaps I haven't played quite fair with you," she said. "But I didn't expect this. I didn't expect any of it. At the beginning all I thought was that I could——"

"It's nothing to do with fairness or unfairness. Things don't happen that way. We should both know that. Life isn't well brought up. It just shoves us about as it pleases."

". . . I'm only trying to be sensible, to see it all from outside ourselves."

"And are you succeeding?"

"No. . . ."

I got up. "Let's go."

"Where?"

"Anywhere. Home."

She stood up slowly with her back to me. I laid my hands on her shoulders and she leaned against me. I put my face in her hair, took a breath.

"When I was a little girl," she said, "I threw a doll that I loved and prized more than anything else at another girl I was angry with. It didn't hit the girl, but fell on the floor and the head broke to pieces."

"Well?"

"I don't want to damage, to upset what is good between us for the sake of a gesture. To make something ordinary and—perhaps sordid in your memory out of what has been . . . up to now——"

"Sordid!" I said. "Good God!"

She gave a little laugh.

"You blow my hesitations away with great broadsides. D'you think they need all that?"

I said: "I'm terrified of even one being left."

We went back by bus, there being no train at that time.

It was the usual crazy journey, more crowded than ever, being evening and no passengers ever turned away. By the time we got to Monaco there were twenty-three standing, and the conductor kept shouting *"avancez dans la couloir, s'il vous plait!"* in a tired chiding tone as if he were a schoolmaster with a bunch of children. At Eze Station five passengers got off and eight climbed volubly in. Parcels and baskets and dirty notes and good temper and ill temper and the smell of garlic and a baby crying.

I got separated from Alix by two fat, talkative women, and every time the bus stopped I tried to reach her again. It would have been all right if I'd been able to see her, but once she was out of touch she seemed to disappear from reality.

The whole thing had suddenly gone off into something not quite earthbound. I kept gripping the back of the seat I was clinging on to and saying to myself: This is real. Alix loves you. Just for the moment, just for tonight nothing else counts—not Jacques, not your blindness, not Pierre.

AT last the bus drew up in the square at Nice and evacuated its chattering contents. I waited till she came up to me and then gripped her arm.

"Why do you hold me like that?"

"I was afraid of never making contact again. I wondered if you'd disappeared or turned into a mimosa tree."

She slid her arm into mine. "No."

"Where shall we go? To my flat?"

"To mine. Mme Colloni is away till tomorrow. I can cook a bit of supper and——"

I said: "This comes of being kind to a strange man in a shoe shop."

"Now I have to cook his supper."

"What to eat? Something nice?"

"Snails, I expect."

"My favourite dish—so long as they're fresh killed."

"I shot them myself."

"What with, a potato gun?"

She said: "We're both quite mad now, Giles." And I answered: "It's a mad world. We meet it on its own terms."

It didn't much matter what we said just then. What mattered was a sort of oneness of feeling and decision. Just for the time we were ahead of reason and common logic. I thought, may it stay so; perhaps it will last; tomorrow's sunrise is ten hours away; if it lasts until then. I thought, blindness isn't everything; supposing she came to England; have I the guts to be selfish, take her youth and chain it to me? But she wouldn't come, she's only being kind.

I said: "Are you only being kind?"

We crossed a street, threaded our way among some empty stalls. There were a few leaves underfoot and what felt like an occasional crushed blossom as from a flower market.

I said: "I'm sorry, I shouldn't have asked that." I could have kicked myself.

She said: "We're nearly there." There wasn't anything more for either of us to say.

Her apartment was on the fourth floor of a tall house. There was no one about. When we got inside the door I said:

"It's dark here, isn't it?"

"Yes."

I pulled her quietly into the recess behind the door and kissed her.

"Darling Alix. Darling Alix. I love you so much."

She said breathlessly, after a moment: "I like it when you speak to me in English."

"I'll speak often to you in English tonight, then."

We went up the stairs.

At the top of the first flight I said: "Someone's coming down. Shall we go up separately to avoid talk?"

"No. It can't be anyone important."

We went on. At the turn of the second flight she stopped. There was a creak of wood as someone leaned over the banisters.

"So there you are," said Pierre Grognard.

I could have murdered him. Alix had dropped my hand, drawn a bit away. It was instinctive, but it meant a lot.

She said: "We've just been to Monte Carlo. I was coming to get a book Giles had lent me."

"So that's how you spend your day off," he said. He came down two steps.

"Not always—as you know. Did you want me for something, Pierre?" She was cool, trying to carry it off.

"I thought you were spending the day with Armand."

"It couldn't be arranged at the last moment."

"I called you up twice, but couldn't get a reply. I left a note under your door about Wednesday."

"Thank you."

"I thought you had promised me not to meet this . . . yokel again?"

"I'm not married to you yet, Pierre."

"Instead I find him sneaking up to your flat late at night—a private apartment from which I am always excluded."

She said: "I think you'd better go now, Pierre."

"Not until I see this man out of the building."

I didn't speak. It seemed to me that the only way to help Alix was to do nothing to make things worse.

She said in a low voice: "Will you forgive me, Giles?"

". . . Of course." I didn't move. With a feeling of black bitter hate and disappointment I heard Alix move from beside me and go towards the third flight.

"Good night, Giles," she said. "And thank you."

"Good night," I got out.

She went slowly up the third flight.

"Good night, Alix," Pierre said.

"Good night."

"I'll call for you on Wednesday. You'll find it all in the note I left."

She didn't reply, but went on. There was silence until we heard a door open and close far up. All the spell of five minutes ago was gone to blazes. The swine, I thought. (But wouldn't you behave like that in his position?) At least, I'd not suggest insultingly to a girl like Alix that. . . . (But wasn't that precisely what had been going to happen?)

GROGNARD said: "Well, what are you waiting for?"

I said: "I was interested to see how offensive you really could be to her."

"If you're so considerate of Alix's feelings I wonder you put her in a position inviting insult."

"I should think almost any excuse would do for you."

He came down the remaining steps and came up to me.

"Go on," he said, "before I kick you down the stairs!"

I said: "I don't feel in much danger of that."

"No doubt you're aware that it's difficult to strike a cripple."

"I should have thought it very easy. Anyway don't let that stand in your light."

After a minute he turned away. "This man is blind and takes advantage of it."

I'd been aware of two other people coming up the stairs who had heard all this and were waiting to get past. I felt too sick and fed up to carry on the schoolboy stuff any more.

A man said: "What is it, m'sieu? What is wrong?"

I didn't know which of us he was addressing, and Pierre answered him.

"This foreigner comes to Nice and plays upon the sympathy of my fiancée. He prevails upon her——"

I said: "If you can't keep your girl faithful without outside help, why don't you go to the mayor and ask him for a distraint order——"

I had half turned to go, and he gave me a shove in the back that sent me against the wall. I turned and swung out with my fist, but didn't find anything.

Then someone had me by the arm.

"Please, m'sieu. If there are any

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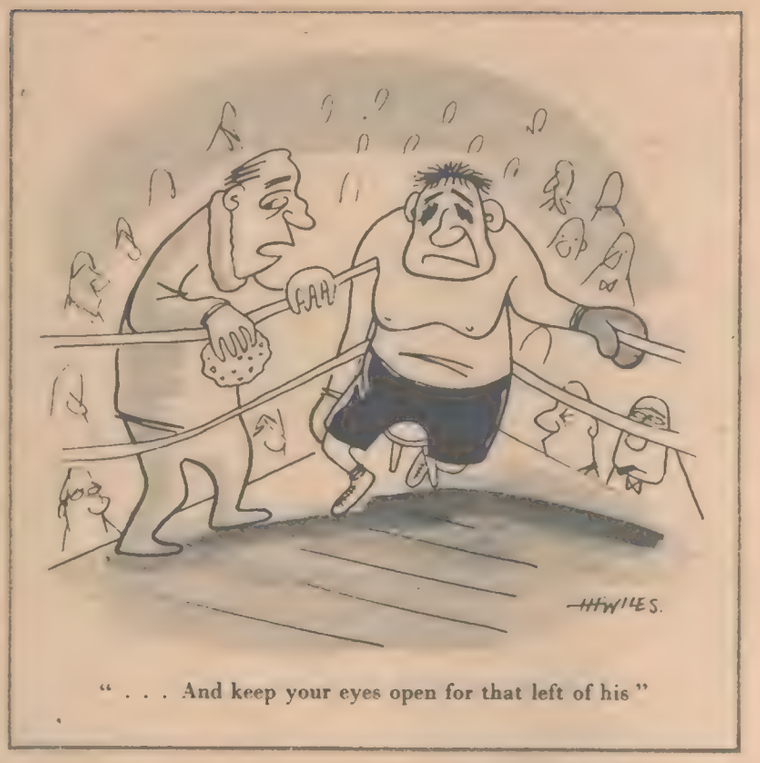

". . . And keep your eyes open for that left of his"

Why not see Britain, I said

PAUL HOLT . . . finds that Wigan Pier is no joke and learns some home truths about William Wordsworth. Memories of an after-the-war car trip end his John Bull series . . . **SIX SUMMERS**

WE LAID THE petrol coupons out on the bed and counted them and recounted them and then decided we could just do it. *Just* do it. There were the basics and a few Es, which I felt entitled to use, since nobody has more business to do at the Edinburgh Festival than a critic. Edinburgh was business. But why not see Britain on the way?

Oxford was the first stop for lunch and we ate at the George. Undergraduates do not change. They used to pretend to be Communists, to be different; now they pretend to be Tories, to be different. There are, of course, an increasing number of earnest ones nowadays, submerging the bloods and men of fashion, and these pretend to be Liberals.

The ones who use the George, however, are pretty *poseurs* all. They talk mostly about food and wine in a most endearing way: "... then a little salad with the garlic waved at it from exactly eighteen inches." And ". . . Welsh rarebit should only be made on rainy days with Parmesan cheese exactly three months old."

And they talk of wine with that casual but awe-filled familiarity one uses after meeting a Prince of the Blood Royal, thus: ". . . that burgundy has the rolling, splendid obviousness of Beethoven," ". . . a little hock with the humour of Honegger," ". . . South African wines are like Puccini with custard."

They Prefer Ices

But if you are sharp you may notice them ordering something they really like, such as a vanilla ice with hot chocolate sauce. Bless them.

Oxford itself is sadly changed. It is as if the entire university has been picked up and dropped again bodily into the middle of Birmingham. The obvious university faces, now lost in the crowd of pushers and perambulators, look confused and furtive, hurrying past the sixpenny multiple stores. I consoled my wife with tales of how beautiful Cambridge is.

We dreamed the afternoon through the poster-paints Cotswold country, all muffled colours, greens and fawns and greys, dotted with snug yellow villages, as secret and pretty as a pipit's nest in the grass.

That night we slept at Malvern, and at breakfast the next morning I was fascinated to overhear the conversation of a clergyman and his wife at the next table. He wore his old school blazer to show he was on holiday, but she, having no such badge of the gay past to ease her, sat dumpily in tired, strained marocain.

He was saying, rather fretfully: "Faith will do much, my dear, but God expects you to help. If you think you dropped your ear-ring up on the hill you must not only pray. You must go and help God look for it. God cannot find it all by Himself, you know."

Gloucester Cathedral is such a nice, homely place, all cluttered with painted wooden memorials to gross burghers and their patient wives. I liked a jolly stone effigy of Osric, King of the Hwiccas. He is lying on his back, a snub-nosed, stubby little man who, during his life, must have been a rearing fellow. To prevent any more nonsense he is pinned down with a model of the cathedral on his chest.

The Robin Hood atmosphere of the Forest of Dean, whose oaks made the little ships that repelled the Armada, is somewhat soured by repeated notices saying "Keep Out. Poison Gas." War has become a low affair, indeed.

Chester is probably the world's first skyscraper city. Enclosed by its military wall, the houses are piled on top of each other, with separate roads, or, at least, promenades, for the top ones, from which the impassively lazy citizens lean the day long to watch the traffic fidget through. Chester is a film set occupied by squatters, by well-filled business men and the Army.

At night in the hotel it is like watching pond life. Toad-like women sit silent with newt-like men, while tadpole children beetle around and young officers with the superciliousness of superior pike swim by in pairs. I was glad to leave the place.

Over Wigan the smog still hangs like *Götterdämmerung* and the joke about the pier is no joke at all. The profiteers who built such slums should be dug up from their graves and spikes driven through their mean hearts.

Outside Lancaster we picked up a hitch-hiking, red-headed, medieval-faced, gum-chewing R.A.F. conscript.

He was going home on leave to Keswick and was bitter about the R.A.F. Before he was called up he had wanted to be an industrial chemist but now he felt that, by the time they let him go, he wouldn't have any time left for the training. And, anyway, he said, he had become too used to idling and wangling to see himself doing any work any more.

We Call On Peter Rabbit

At Windermere we broke progress to pay respects at the shrine of Mrs. Tiggy Winkle, Jemima Puddleduck, Tabitha Twitchit, Tom Kitten, Peter Rabbit and all the delicious "small trash" painted and invented by Beatrix Potter. She lived at Hill Top Farm at Sawrey near Hawkshead.

The house stands hidden behind a pub, little and gentle, grey, creeper-covered. The lettuces the Flopsy Bunnies found so soporific are there, but not more than thirty of them. There was one tortoiseshell, one white and two black-and-white kittens, obviously the descendants of Tom Kitten, and many, many puddle ducks. Tabitha Twitchit's shop is plain to see and the road out of Sawrey is clearly the road on which Pigling Bland set off to market.

At Grasmere, we called at William Wordsworth's early home, Dove Cottage. It is so small and cramped and dark, it seems a miracle so many poets, like Southey and Scott, ever packed in.

Across the road at the Wordsworth museum I got talking to the curator, a small, rosy-cheeked refugee from, I should say, Vienna.

Diffidently my wife said: "Was Wordsworth *really* such an unpleasant man?" The little man's eye brightened. "You are so right. All these people here, they come to worship. But they do not know. Here, come see his death mask and you will see him as he really is. . . . You see the mean mouth? The weak chin? The low forehead? That is the real Wordsworth."

I suppose you get like that if you live with a famous man's relics for too long.

Scotland's First Glen

We did not need to call on Gretna Green, but just along the road as you pass into Scotland there is a sign saying: "Visit Robert the Bruce's Only Authentic Cave. The First and Bonniest Glen in Scotland." This was irresistible. We found the cave at the end of a perilously rotten wooden platform against the sheer cliff overhanging a cool, brown trout stream.

The guide began to rattle off his story. It was a fine performance. He rattled at top speed how Robert had leant against the rock where a hollow to hold his back had been made by cavemen ten centuries before. "This cave," he gabbled, "was safe against the attack of spears, arrows and crossbows, muskets and cannon."

"Excuse me . . ." I said faintly.

"In this last war it was safe from bombs and in this next war it will be safe from atom bombs."

"Excuse me," I said again, more loudly. "Is there a spider?"

The man stopped, irritated. Then he was desperately down on his knees, peering about; and there—oh, thankfulness—suspended from a thread in the bright embrasure, there hung the smallest spider I ever saw in my life.

". . . the attacks of spears, arrows, atom bombs . . . impregnable!" the man repeated, completely triumphant.

Edinburgh was the greatest fun, except that too many improbable people were wearing too many proper kilts. On the way home we stopped at Cambridge. The obvious university faces were lost in the crowd of pushers and, looking confused and furtive, hurried past the sixpenny stores. In the quadrangle of Sidney Sussex, where Chaucer, Milton *et al.* studied and walked, there stood a perambulator.

Homing, I was silent. That night, in London, I spread out our coupon on the bed. One.

"Suspended from a thread was a spider. The guide was triumphant"

"WHAT A DIFFERENCE, NOW I CAN GET SUPER OXYDOL EVERY TIME"

says Mrs Dorothy Steadman of Dorking

"Washday used to be twice the trouble the weeks I couldn't get Oxydol", says Mrs. Steadman. "Thank goodness we can get it on every ration now". Mrs. Steadman washes for her husband and her two children, one aged six and the other two.

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Super OXYDOL

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JB

He insults the players, abuses the ref., hurls bottles on the field, and starts fights in the stands. He's . . .

The great American spectator

by ROLAND WILD

NEW YORK.

A MILD LITTLE MAN, a pillar of the local church and the Rotary Club, passed through the turnstiles and took his seat quietly in the crowd at the baseball game. Ten minutes later he stood up with an uproarious mob of similar inoffensive little men and women and addressed an athlete far down below on the diamond.

"Bum!" he screamed passionately. "Get my grandma in to bat!"

The remark passed almost unnoticed. All around the little man, others were directing the attention of the gods to the palsy of their former heroes. Men were stating without possibility of doubt that the players were born out of wedlock, that they were in the pay of the opposition, that the umpires were blind or blind drunk, and that they, the spectators, had been cheated and sold down the river. It was an exhibition of the Great American Spectator at his least inhibited best, or possibly worst.

The American does not merely attend a sporting festival. He takes part in it. At the international polo games not long ago, I watched and listened while spectators who had never seen the game before hurled abuse at the umpires, criticized every move on the part of their own first-class players, and loudly told the idols of Argentina that they, the spectators, could do better riding tired hacks from the local livery stable.

Clouted Georgeous George

At an all-in wrestling match, the Wild Man of the Pampas had Gorgeous George in a tight lock, his arm pressing the marcelled head of Gorgeous down on the canvas, while over the features of the prostrate dandy of the grunt and groan circuit there spread an expression of acute agony. This was not enough for one spectator at least. An elegant woman in the front seats leant forward, picked up her shoe, and dealt Gorgeous George a pulverizing blow on the temple with her French heel.' She was a spectator—and therefore a participant and entitled to her action.

Americans have never been content to sit on the sidelines and accept the spectacle offered to them. They have watched with some amazement the equanimity of the English cricket spectator, and been lulled to sleep by the genteel applause and stereotyped comments. At football they have hurled bottles, turned on their companions, and conducted mayhem in the covered stands. Watching ice-hockey, they have burst through to the rink, bopped husky players on the nose and struggled with umpires.

And, at last, the rulers of the most vociferous game of all, baseball, have decided that it is time for spectators to be controlled and the game to be made safe for officials. Baseball Commissioner "Happy" Chandler, ruminating over the latest fracas between players and spectators, has ordered that ball-park officials be stricter in handling roughnecks in the crowds, and that police take a sterner attitude towards paying customers who feel bound to interfere, by voice or action, with the course of the game.

The Giant Was Angry

The decision arose out of a "slug-fest," as the Press reported it, between an irate spectator who hurled himself on to the field and endeavoured to inflict permanent injury on Leo Durocher, the stormy petrel of baseball and manager of the New York Giants.

Mr. Durocher, who has always captured the headlines either for defending his honour by force of arms, or by marrying Laraine Day, stated that throughout the game he had been subject to a string of abuse from this spectator, and welcomed the opportunity of mutilating him slightly when he ventured close enough.

The great Ty Cobb once remained patient for six innings while a fan with a clarion voice repeatedly questioned his birth certificate, his right to be present on the field, and his personal habits. Ty Cobb then went up into the stands to find his critic, and crowned him with a baseball bat while thousands cheered.

"Take me out to the ball-game!" they sing. But today there is a general movement to take mayhem out of the ball-game.

At many sports fields, the sections where cold drinks in bottles may be sold are strictly limited by the authorities. This is because, when emptied, the bottle becomes such an admirable missile, and the desire to hurl it at a disappointing player becomes almost insupportable in the mind of the chagrined American spectator. Instead, paper cups are issued —and there is nothing so frustrating as the endeavour to hurl a paper cup.

Bottled drinks are sold in parts of the stands where the range is too great, or where the high prices might reasonably be presumed to indicate that decorum will be more general.

The high level of rowdyism at sports events all over the country is bemoaned by the sports writers and most of the public, and once again Brooklyn, which has been blamed for so many things, is being made the scapegoat. "Brooklyn is the home of the hurled pop-bottle," writes Vincent X. Flaherty.

The Brooklyn Dodgers were first called 'The Bums,' and the Brooklyn club has done nothing to rid itself of its indelicate nickname. The club, indeed, seems to relish it as a term of endearment. 'Dem beautiful bums,' they call them.

George Jessel, the vaudeville actor, contributes another note on the behaviour of American crowds. "I once overheard a man saying he was going to tell his boss what he thought of him. 'I know where he's going to sit at the ball-game, and I'm going to shout at him.'

"His friend asked: 'But what if he turns round and sees you?' 'That's easy,' the first man said. 'I can always say I'm calling to one of the ball players.'"

Brooklyn Dodgers' supporters: they would be lulled to sleep by "genteel applause of English cricket crowd"

At Funerals, Too

If the American spectator appears to be swayed by his emotions when he has paid for his view of the struggle, he is a prey to the most violent passions when sentiment grips him at a funeral, a parade, or a traffic-tying interruption in the smooth course of the city's business. This enthusiasm for the extraordinary, however, is not always sufficient for the gentry who live by exploiting the public emotion—the Press agents.

There have been regrettable instances of mobs being routed at funerals and weddings. One "praise agent," or "flack," has indeed confessed that at the funeral procession of a movie star, he found the crowds insufficiently demonstrative.

He therefore ordered henchmen to roll barrels into the outskirts of the populace. The desired effect of hysteria was obtained—there were few maimings, but the crowd stampeded satisfactorily.

When the Shamrock Hotel was recently opened in Texas, with a trainload of stars from Hollywood and New York, the crowd reaction was so great that mobs invaded the dining-room where Dorothy Lamour was endeavouring to make a broadcast, thousands of invited guests went without their dinners, and mass confusion arose.

It may be that one day American spectators will be required to curb their enthusiasm, keep their throwing arms in their pockets and address their fallen heroes only by words that they would use in their own homes.

The proposed move is to make baseball parks into places where you can take your wife and children, without the danger of them being involved in a mêlée or picking up a new vocabulary, though, to many, this will take much of the sting out of baseball, and even seems like a threat to American freedom of speech.

Police may yet move in a flying wedge against a hail of missiles and arrest an over-vocal supporter. But, until that day comes, the average American spectator will feel it is his right and his duty to inform the world with lungs of brass that the players, the umpires, the managers and the directors are morons who have sold the game, cripples who have never known a mother's love or a father's recognition, and, furthermore, traitors to the great traditions of baseball in Detroit, Kalamazoo, and Commotion, Indiana.

It's part of the game, they say. The Great American Spectator is in there, as he says, pitching. But he may no longer pitch profanity and dangerous missiles.

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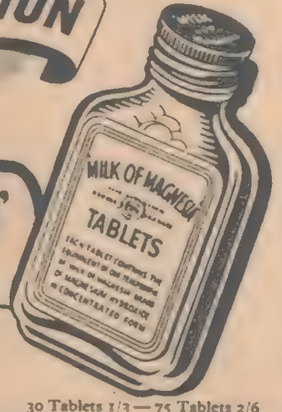

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NIGHT WITHOUT STARS

Continued from page 24

differences they should be settled in a manner——"

"We cannot have fighting here!"

"Mon dieu, this a pretty scene!"

Evidently somebody was restraining Grognard, too. There were about four people there now who'd been brought by our voices, and one woman spoke with authority, as if she had something to do with the flats. She badly wanted to know whom we'd been visiting, but Pierre had at least the sense to keep that to himself.

We went down the stairs and were shown out of the front door. The woman stood on the top step talking after us. "Brawling on the stairs. Mon dieu, some people have no idea. They should go and cool their heads in the harbour! If my husband was here!" There are those who cannot hold their wine. They will be sick as dogs before the night is out. For two pins I would call the police!" I heard Grognard go off and then stop a taxi and get in. Raging and humiliated and sick of it all, I began to make my way home.

JOHN CHAPEL, the consul, rang me up next day and said: "Look, old boy, I've got a fellow coming in this evening; might just be your cup of tea; a Scotsman called McWheeler. Let's see, you still play bridge, don't you?"

"No, not these days."

"Oh, sorry. He's frightfully keen, I thought we might have had a foursome. Anyway, the point is he's over here on business, and it occurred to me you might be of use to each other. What?"

It was on my tongue to say: "I've changed my mind, Johnny; the South of France means nothing to me at all now; I'm going home next week and staying there." But it seemed a bit curt after he'd gone to the trouble of thinking something up.

I said: "All right, Johnny. Many thanks. I'll be along."

From his voice I pictured McWheeler as a stout chap with a bald head and black eyebrows, but possibly that was just my fancy.

He said: "Actually I'm in the biscuit trade, Mr. Gordon, but that's really beside the point. I'm in France at present representing our Chamber of Commerce and over thirty Scottish export interests. You *have* made a special study of commercial law, I understand from Chapel?"

"Yes," I said, and thought: to hell with commercial law and exports, and with Alix, who meekly takes that arrogant fool's dictation and hasn't even had the decency to phone me. . . .

"Well, since I came over here I've been very much impressed by the need for someone who can advise us generally on the French scene—someone particularly with an expert legal background. This big expansion of exports has brought up all sorts of little problems in its train—I'm over here about a case of infringement of designs, for one thing—and it comes hard on some of the smaller firms who have had no knowledge of the export trade until last year. Of course, we can get help from Government sources, but often that hasn't the *personal* interest behind it."

He looked at me shrewdly. "A man on the spot who could advise in an expert way could be of considerable value."

"Yes," I said. And to hell with myself for getting out on a limb, for being in a rage of jealousy, for taking myself too seriously and pushing Alix into an impossible position where she couldn't behave straightly with anyone.

"I understand," said McWheeler, "that you are short sighted but able to conduct affairs quite ably. You know something of French law?"

"Very little, I'm afraid."

"Oh. But you studied in Paris for a year?"

". . . I wasn't studying law." John had evidently been putting over a sales talk.

MCWHEELER seemed a bit thoughtful. "Well, the man I envisage will have to become acquainted with it. Not that I look on this as work which would be purely legal in character. We've men we could send over who could do that. But when Chapel mentioned you and your wish to live in France it seemed worth discussing the matter. . . ."

"That's very good of you."

". . . I'm not here, of course, to make any appointment—I'm not empowered to do that—I'm not even sure that it would be a full-time job yet. But we certainly feel the need of someone and some such representative, someone who understands France and the French from the inside. It's the psychological approach, you know—to avoid the legal channel rather than to seek it. A personal interview, a few words explaining a point of view—that's the important thing, which can't be done from a thousand miles away. There's any amount of good will over here so long as it isn't frustrated by petty misunderstandings and surface differences in methods of doing business."

"Oh, there's any amount of good will," I agreed. Did I understand France and the French from the inside? What about Pierre? What's the psychological slant on him?

"I confess," said McWheeler, getting confidential over the third drink, "that I find the Continental approach to things a little unbees-nesslike. I'm speaking as an outsider, mind you. But they often seem to be optimistic or the reverse—without being logical. That is, they don't seem to see the future in terms of hard fact. You either have pessimistic irrelevances brought in, or else you are gratuitously assured that 'everything will be all right' without any apparent effort having been made to envisage the difficulties."

I said: "Nothing's working properly yet. The Government's torn between the extremist groups and is afraid to give a lead. The ordinary business man just shrugs his shoulders and lives from day to day."

"Aye. But I'm not sure that that

NOW YOU KNOW

by BERNARD GEIS

THE PRACTICE OF clipping long-haired dogs in the summer is bad. For one thing this exaggerated haircut deprives the dog of his natural protection against flies. Besides, a long-haired dog's coat serves not only as a defence against the cold in winter, but also as insulation against the summer heat.

Nature generally knows what she is doing. Man, for his part, can help by brushing and combing his dog daily.

quite answers my complaint, because isn't any Government composed of ordinary individuals? Isn't putting the blame on the Government an easy excuse for avoiding the responsibility yourself? Mind you, I don't know. I'm asking you these things."

We talked for about half an hour. He seemed decent enough, and I felt an imposter (*a*) because he evidently didn't realize what a total write-off I'd become and (*b*) because the incentive was gone which might have made me anxious to do something for him.

Yet because I couldn't *quite* make up my mind never to attempt to see Alix again, I stalled a bit and let the thing move on, so that when he finally left we'd arranged a further meeting in a fortnight's time when he got back from Italy.

I didn't realize then how much else would have moved on in a fortnight.

I WAS listening to the radio when the phone bell rang. It was three days since the meeting with McWheeler.

I lifted the receiver, and someone said something I couldn't catch.

"Wait," I said, and switched off the set. "Yes?"

"Mme Colloni?" said a woman's voice.

"You've got the wrong number," I said, and then stopped. Alix's voice. "Hallo!"

"Mme Colloni. I've phoned to say I'll not be back tonight. I thought you might be worried if you didn't hear."

I said: "Is that Alix?"

"Yes. This is Alix Delaisse speaking."

"What's the matter? Where are you?"

"At M. Grognard's flat. I can't say exactly when I shall be home, but I'll let you know. Don't bother forwarding any letters."

I said: "This is Giles. Are you playing some sort of a joke?"

"Of course not," said the voice casually. "I thought I'd ring you just to let you know."

"Let me know what? What's wrong. D'you want me to come round?"

"Yes, please do. It will be much better if you do that."

"Is Pierre with you."

"Thank you very much," said the voice. "Goodbye." The line went dead.

The conversation was like an overheard one on a crossed wire. Yet the voice had seemed to answer some of my questions. And the voice was Alix's. I felt irritated and a bit put out. Grognard's flat was the last place. But she must have known that—it wasn't in her interest to provoke a rough-house—perhaps Pierre was away. Then. . . .

I'd never heard Alix speak like that before. I found my shoes, put them on and laced them, picked up my stick. By a piece of luck, old Larosse was fiddling about in the hall, and I asked him if there was a chance of a taxi.

"Perhaps round the corner, m'sieu. Shall I go and see for you?"

I waited in the doorway, blowing on the handle of my stick. Larosse didn't come back. After a while I began to fume. It would have been a bit of an awkward walk for me, but at least I should have been well on the way by now. I always hate waiting, and this phone call had got under my skin.

Just as I was about to go off I heard the clip-clop of hoofs on the road.

"It was difficult, m'sieu. In the end I had to bring a fiacre."

"Rue St. Laurent du Var," I said to the cab driver.

"Very well, m'sieu."

As I got in I tried to remember the name of the bookshop. Something to do with a duck. We clip-clopped off into the night.

It seemed a long way.

"What number?" he said presently.

"The bookshop. Mallards." That was it.

"*Et, voila.*"

I got out, paid him his outrageous charge without argument, and crossed the pavement. For a minute I wasn't quite sure where I was, then realized he'd brought me just past the shop. I turned back and it wasn't long before my fingers found the door leading upstairs. I could tell that the stairs were lighted, but that was about all.

At the top was the door of his flat. I fumbled about and found the bell.

No one came. I rang again. Someone was singing or humming in the flat. A man. I caught English words. "*You found I was true. Although you knew you'd broken your date with love. . . .*"

The wait for the taxi had made me more impatient than usual. I groped for the knocker, but there didn't seem to be one. But slight pressure showed that the door was ajar.

I pushed it open an inch or two and said, "Anyone at home?"

Nobody answered. It was the radio that was on—but not the station I'd been listening to at home.

"*It's all very fine to take that line, but no one can ask for more than I gave in keeping a date with love.*"

I went in.

It seemed to be one of those flats where the front door opens straight into the living-room. The light was on and I got a definite feeling of space. The radio was on very low, in the far left-hand corner.

AN awkward situation. A call over the phone—either designedly or by way of crossed wires—had brought me to Pierre's flat, where I certainly wouldn't be welcomed by its owner.

Perhaps Alix and Pierre were in another room having a meal or the servant had gone out for something and left the door ajar. But if Alix wasn't here I'd better get out again quick. She'd been here: I could tell that at once from the faint scent.

Perhaps at this moment Pierre was sitting by the wireless sneering at me. I cursed not being able to see.

After a bit I began to walk into the room feeling the way with my stick and moving towards the wireless. I got round a small table and a chair, nearly came to grief over a tiger-skin rug, found the wall and then the wireless.

"*Ici Radio Paris. Vous avez entendre* ——"

I switched it off.

There was no one in the room. Could tell that at once now. The only sound was from an electric fire over to my left.

Work it out. You came in at the door and the hearth and electric fire were to your right. The radio was left corner. There were probably a couple of doors to the other rooms, one in the left wall, one in the far wall, not a long way from where I was standing. Perhaps it was Alix and Pierre who had just gone out and would be back in a minute. Perhaps Pierre was in Monte Carlo and it was just Alix. Wait a bit and see.

I waited.

It's a quiet part of Nice, and there was only an occasional car passing outside. A clock was ticking over above the electric fire. In the distance a train whistled. Occasionally a piece of furniture "cricked" slightly. The bookshop was shut and the staff had gone home. I wondered if there was another flat above. If so, no one moved in it.

Somebody'd been smoking a Turkish cigarette recently, and there was a faint stale smell somewhere like stale water.

The clock began to ping suddenly. Ten.

The sound got me impatient again. I began to feel along the wall beside the wireless set. Expensively framed picture; ornament like a mask; door. Just about where one would have expected it.

I lifted my stick and gave a sharp rap: one, two, three, on the panels.

Nothing happened. Surprising how startling a noise you make yourself can be.

I felt for the handle, turned it and the door opened. A step in. Darkness, and I didn't bother to put on the light, because again I could tell the room was empty. Unmistakably a man's bedroom: you could smell the hair cream, the sheets, the shoes and suits, the toothpaste. I backed out and shut the door.

That was that. Now was the other hunch right, that there would be another door in the left wall? Back to the wireless and then move off along the left wall. Bookshelves, a cupboard with glass handles; probably drinks. Contact with the tiger rug again. More wall. No, wrong. No door there.

I turned about and wondered whether to leave. Not comfortable. Yet Alix had been here. And the more I thought of it the more likely it seemed that she'd deliberately phoned me. Old Larosse and the fiacre.

Try the opposite wall, between the fire and the main door. I went back to the main door and moved across in the other direction. In a bit I should have completed a circuit of the walls.

Ah. . . . A door here. My sense of the plan of the place had been wrong. Knock again. Again no answer. Open it.

A kitchen. The light on here, but empty. Go in a few paces. Smell of herbs, eggs, raw steak, coffee, one of the mild cheeses, probably Chevre; it all smelled clean; there had been no cooking done there today. What servants did Pierre employ? Never heard. Probably one man. Anyhow, the servant was away or out.

Back into the living-room again. There was only one small corner now unexplored, and that didn't seem worth bothering about. There was also the large central space of the room not quite furnished in my mind.

THE fireplace was warm with the heat of the electric fire. I turned away from it and touched the end of a cretonne-covered settee. Negotiating this, I moved across in the general direction of the glass-handled cupboard. If there was to be a wait, a drink would help to pass the time.

At that moment my foot trod on something, which crunched lightly under it. I bent down and found a carnation on the carpet. The head itself was wet, and in a moment the tips of my fingers were wet as they touched the floor. A dozen other carnations and then a glass vase. It had evidently been knocked over or had fallen over, but it wasn't broken. I stuck the flowers in the vase and felt around for a table, found one and put the vase on it.

Hands on the glass handles of the cupboard I paused. I certainly hadn't tipped over the flowers. Whoever had done so must have been very untidy or in a devil of a hurry. Open the cupboard.

Disappointment here. China ornaments of some sort instead of bottles. The cupboard doors were of glass: Pierre evidently collected pieces of Doulton or Sèvres. His display cabinet. Shepherdesses and peacocks and cottages and dogs and little men and women sitting on chairs. Careful not to knock any down. Fine work.

Put them back. Well . . . stay or go? I'd already been here a good ten minutes and no one had come in. The flat was obviously empty. *Yet Alix had phoned from here.* I moved back to the settee. Wait another five, or as near as could be gauged. I sat down on the settee and lit a cigarette.

Once sure that the place was empty, and with the general layout in my mind, I'd begun to feel a bit better about the whole thing; but now, for no particular reason, I began to get uneasy again. Perhaps it was just the silence. Twice I fancied footsteps coming up the stairs, and once a car stopped nearly outside, and I half got up expecting to hear someone come in. Then after a bit I began to have the idea that someone was creeping up behind the settee. This was just silly because I should have heard the slightest sound.

The clock was ticking away like anything. There might have been an urgency about it, as if it wanted to get to the end

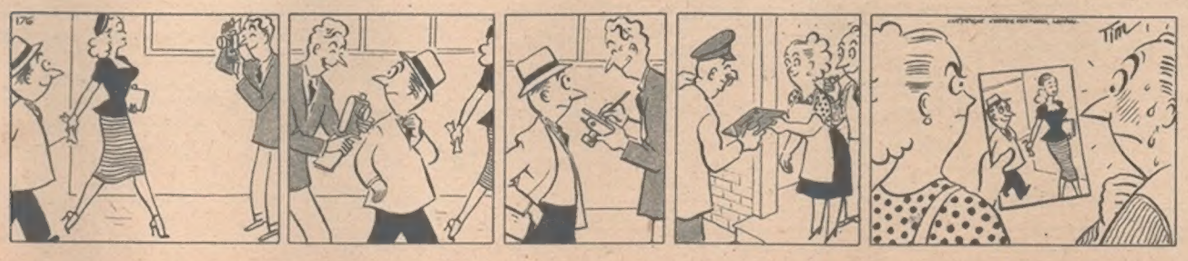
Continued on next page

THIS WEEK'S COVER

MICHAEL BERNARD CRITCHLOW, who painted this cover picture, is a Wolverhampton man with two teenage sons of his own. The picture was inspired by a visit to Pets' Corner at the London Zoo. Critchlow is a man with many hobbies and he finds that they give him most of his ideas. When inspiration is needed, he says, a game of golf, snooker or billiards is always a help.

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM



Who's next for a Trip to the Continent?

FROM a jar of home-made jam, produced by his thrifty wife, reader L. A. Julian got the idea for his £500 *Bullet*: THANKS TO HER—"HOME PRODUCTS," BALANCED "BUDGET."

Soon he and Mrs. Julian will be leaving their home at 6 Broughton Grove, Grimsby, for the prize holiday in Switzerland which accompanied his big cheque.

You and a companion can soon be flying off by B.E.A. "Viking" for a weekend in Paris to celebrate winning £500. Get down to some *Bullets* for your coupon below—that's the way to follow Mr. Julian to the Continent!

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RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in *Bulletin* and *Gazette* dated Sept. 24 and in JOHN BULL dated Oct. 1, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams employees (and families) ineligible.

OTHER PRIZES THIS WEEK

£50, £25, £20, £10, 5 of £5

10 of £2.10, 50 "Bullets" Seasons, 3,000 "Good Shot" Awards

FOUNTAIN-PEN BONUSES

A fine Fountain-pen accompanies each of the twenty chief cheques won with *Bullet* which was one of four or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

ADD 2, 3 or 4 WORDS to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* on right. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

Voice Of Democracy	In His Ignorance
Hungry Man	Would Do It
Dollars Or No Dollars	Afraid Of Nothing
Football's Magic	Felt Famous
Come Down To Earth	Ran The Gauntlet
And	A Bit Too Hasty
Domestic Crisis	
Intelligence	
Machinery Of The Law	
Jet-propelled	
With High Hopes	
Got On	
Free And Easy	
Mother's World	
Pays Dividends	

Incomplete "Examples"—see instructions

National .....
When It's.....Turn
Threatened With.....
.....As We Are
Chained To The.....
Some Like....., But

32 PAGES

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Secure *Bullets Bulletin* and *Crossword Gazette* for 8 weeks—apply on coupon below for REDUCED RATE supply.

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Closing Postmark, **1,696** MON., SEPT 5

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3 BIG CHEQUES WON XWORD 643

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1, Words. 3, Told. 5, Way or Why. 10, Racing. 12, Deed. 13, Cloys. 14, Crooked. DOWN: 1, Wares. 2, Shy. 4, Dears. 6, Fun. 7, Waster. 8, Mime. 9, Din. 11, Desk.

THREE £100 SHARERS: G. Lindsay, J. Lindsay and Mrs. J. H. Lindsay, all of 45 Stand Park Road, Childwall, Liverpool, 16. In addition, each Winner receives a 20-lb. Food Parcel.

Awards value £25 for 1st Runners-up shared by 26 entrants. Useful "Signpost" Prizes awarded to 2nd Runners-up.

"Bullets" Winners 1,691

FIRST PRIZE, £500: S. Hartshorn, 133 Breach Road, Heanor, Derbyshire: HAPPIER WORLD OR CHUCKLING BABY BETRAYED!

SECOND PRIZE, £50: J. Mapp, "Blakemoor," Rock, Nr. Kidderminster: IN THE BAG—NOT EVEN AMETHYST'S *Cat*!

THIRD PRIZE, £25: Mrs. B. Frost, "Ploughman's Oak," 38 Coniston Avenue, Headington, Oxford: HOUSEWIFE'S POUND—CHANGED, GONE! CHANGE COMING?

OTHER AWARDS: £10: R. Parkin, 3 Deansbrook Road, Edgware: RAILWAY SANDWICH—IS RUBBERY—AND ROBBERY! £10: G. Wilding, 28 Grimshaw Lane, Ormskirk: MAN AT THE KREMLIN—REMOTE? CONTROLS! £5: L. Graham, Church Cottage, Shilbottle, Alnwick: MAN AT THE TOP—"SILHOUETTED"—WHAT A "TARGET"! £5: W. J. Nott, Rose Cottage, Bickington, Barnstaple: MAN AT THE WHEEL—HELM, REGULATOR, JOYSTICK—SONNY! £5: J. Rodgers, 147 Sutton Road, Huthwaite, Mansfield: HAPPIER WORLD—REMOTE? PROMOTE! £5: J. M. Thorpe, 81 Hopedale Road, Frecheville, Sheffield: FOR LOVE—OF BRITAIN, *Keep* "HEART"! £5: L. Thorpe, 206 Manchester Road, Denton, Manchester: A GIFT PARCEL — AMERICA PROMISES "HUNGRY" *Dictator*!

First five prizes each plus Seaside Holiday for Two, arranged by Cook's.

For 10 winners of £2 10s., see last week's "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*.

25 Prizes of £1, 50 "Season Ticket" Awards and 3,000 "Good Shots" have also been posted.

CASH, FOOD and OTHER XWORD PRIZES

£100 FIRST PRIZE

(Winner's Telegram Friday, September 16)

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20-lb. FOOD PARCELS

with all prizes value £1 and over, providing useful extras for your larder and luxuries for your table

THIS WAY TO WIN

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues on right. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one*, *two* or *three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues **XWORD 648**

3. What holidaymakers expect at popular resorts
5. Sordid one sometimes attracts attention of local authority
6. Kiddies naturally ask for
10. It may be wise to turn round when you find you're heading straight for
14. Psychiatrist who gets this into patient's mind may be of real help
15. Dealing with this kind of person, one requires tact

Down Clues

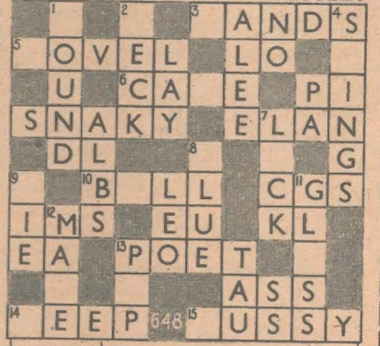
1. Fresh ball will be needed when the one in play is not this
2. When you get band on this, it should harmonize properly
4. Accidents can happen when kiddies fool about with these
7. Certain kind of this may frustrate even the cleverest burglar
8. Can be very messy unless carefully handled
9. Should not be allowed to decide any really vital issue
11. May well not hold water
12. Describes certain kind of staff
13. Usually bubbles over when released

WIN A CHEQUE AND 20-lb. FOOD PARCEL!

In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.), Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.), and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink, not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated Sept. 17.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature below is agreement to Rules.



CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
No.		1s.
No.		2s.

(Total fee shown includes entry on Square)

I enclose P.O. value.....

No. .....

Signed .....

Address .....

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648 Closing Postmark MON., SEPT. 5

NIGHT WITHOUT STARS

Continued from previous page

of the day and start again. As if its hairspring had slipped and it was racing, trying to tell me. . . . For something to do I put my wrist watch up to my good eye, but, of course, it was no use. I could just make out the darker blur of my wrist.

There were various faint smells in the room I couldn't pin down; and perhaps they were at the back of the added feeling of unease. Or perhaps it was the overturned flower vase. Or perhaps it was the continued silence, coming into the flat of an enemy, where the lights and the fire were burning, the radio on, finding nobody and sitting here listening and waiting. And not being able to *see*.

I began to feel convinced I was being *watched*. There were six of them, sitting in different parts of the room, all watching me and waiting. A Chinaman with a knife, a grinning lunatic. And the man I'd seen in the ditch near Caen, and that girl with lupus. . . .

Careful. That way. . . . I alone was in darkness, that was what it amounted to. There was danger somewhere and I didn't know of it. There was a gun pointed at my head, a knife lifted. . . . I had to move, to duck, or. . . .

"Who's there?" I said, turning my head swiftly.

The same silence. I got up.

At least—I began to get up, and in doing so put my hand down farther along the settee. My hand touched a man's coat sleeve.

I got in a hell of a panic and grasped the man's arm in self-defence, putting my other hand up to guard my face. He moved across the settee to attack me, but I struck at him and jumped up, nearly fell, backed away.

I backed into a table and it went over with a crash, the vase of flowers with it—and this time the vase broke.

I stumbled back over the tiger rug and fetched up against the wall.

The sweat had broken out all over my hands and arms. I waited for him to move again, but he didn't.

I said: "Is it you, Grognard?"

Couldn't see—and now somehow mustn't be able to hear. I rubbed my eyes instinctively, trying. . . .

Couldn't hear the man's breathing; my own was noisy enough. "God!" I said and stumbled back to the settee. He'd fallen full length across the seat of it, one hand touching the floor. The smell of his clothes told me it was Pierre Grognard; he was dead.

To be continued next week

WRITE TO JOHN BULL ABOUT IT

Readers with personal problems (other than medical) can ask for advice from our team of experts. Queries should be sent to the John Bull Free Advice Service, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Enclose a stamped envelope for reply, please.

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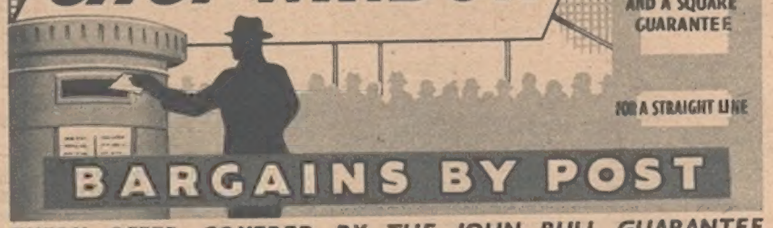

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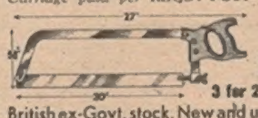

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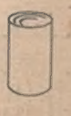
WONDERFUL Foods

ENGLISH CANNED SOUPS · VEGETABLES · FRUITS



BP. 18/1219